

No. 27

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ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY



JACK LIGHTFOOT'S IRON ARM

OR HOW THE NEW

"SPIT" BALL

WORKED THE CHARM



MAURICE STEVENS

Tom Lightfoot well knew that unless the boys lowered those lines from the team down to him in a hurry he was in for a nasty fall.

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

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No. 27.

NEW YORK, August 12, 1905.

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JACK LIGHTFOOT'S IRON ARM;

OR,

How the New "Spit" Ball Worked the Charm.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

Ned Skeen, of impulsive, nervous temperament, but a good friend of Jack's.

Nat Kimball, an undersized fellow, whose hobby was the study of *jiu-jitsu*, and who had a dread of germs.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a staunch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

Phil Kirtland, a rival of Jack's, but who is not averse to winning a little glory at times, even if he has to share it with Lightfoot.

Jubal Marlin, one of Jack's friends, with a Yankee love for making money.

Kate Strawn and **Nellie Conner**, two Cranford girls, friends of Jack.

Boralmo, a Hindoo magician who cherished a deep dislike for Jack.

Reel Snodgrass, claiming to be a nephew of the banker.

Mr. Snodgrass, a rich banker of Cranford, retired from business.

Delancy Shelton, a dude who has "money to burn."

CHAPTER I.

THE RETURN OF BORALMO.

Reel Snodgrass gasped, and sank limply into a chair, when he came into his room at the Cranford House, and saw the man who sat there awaiting him.

The man smiled in a sarcastic way, while his black eyes snapped and seemed to have a strange spark of red fire behind them.

"You don't seem glad to see me?"

Reel had turned pale even under the sunburn that darkened his face.

"Where did you come from?" he asked.

"You think you'd rather see the Old Boy himself than me, eh?"

"I didn't say so."

"No; but you looked so."

Reel got up and closed the door, locking it and drop-

ping the key into his pocket. Having done that he came back, dropped heavily into his chair, and stared at the smiling face before him.

"You see, it's this way," he explained; "I'm occupying these rooms with a friend, Delancy Shelton, and I don't care to have him see you, if he should happen to bump back here suddenly."

The man laughed and rubbed his hands together; they were small, dark, lean hands, with long, slender fingers.

"If he found the door locked," Reel went on, "and couldn't open it—for I've bolted it as well as locked it, you see—he'd think something was the matter with the lock, and would hustle away to get some hotel man to fix it; and then, while he was gone, you could get out."

"But if I didn't want to get out?"

"Then I'd have to tumble you into that closet and turn the key on you, and keep you there a while; for I don't want him to see you."

The man—he was a small man—sat laughing silently in his chair, while merriment showed his white teeth and made his fiery eyes sparkle more than ever.

"Where in time did you come from?" Reel demanded. "Answer me that. I thought you were out in Chicago."

"I was; but one doesn't have to stay in Chicago. I worked East, giving exhibitions on the way; and being in this vicinity I thought I'd drop in and give you a call. Of course you're glad to see me!"

"Well, yes, I am glad to see you, or ought to be!"

"That's good—ought to be? Where would you be now, if I hadn't helped you?"

"Right here, I guess."

"Oh, you would—not!"

"I think I would. At any rate I'm here, and I find it so pleasant altogether that I'm going to stay. Unless"—he hesitated—"you chip in and make trouble for me."

"I'm in need of money," said the man, hungrily; "how much have you got?"

"Nothing."

"Not a thing that you'd think worth notice."

He put a hand into his pocket and pulled out some small coins.

"That's everything I've got."

"Your uncle Snodgrass isn't shelling out to you?"

"Not on your life, he isn't. He's as close as the bark on a beech tree."

"You might crack his crib some dark night and get what you need or want."

"I don't care to risk it."

"And about this fellow who's staying with you?"

He leaned toward Reel eagerly.

"Has he got any money? He must have, or you wouldn't be putting up with him I think. And these things show it."

He nodded toward the rich furnishings which Delancy had put into the rooms.

"What's his name?"

"Delancy Shelton."

"Rich?"

"Yes, rather rich."

The man looked craftily round the room, at the pictures and other things.

"I think I'd like to investigate this—if I find I have time; it might be worth it to me, and you could help me. But"—he turned to Reel again—"I came here to-night for something else."

Reel did not answer. His face was still pale and he seemed to fear or dread this man.

"I came over to see Snodgrass. I'm to give an exhibition to-morrow night—sleight-of-hand, hypnotism, and all that—in Cardiff; so I've only this one night, and to-morrow, to do what I can. I want money, and I've come to get it out of Snodgrass."

The mention of the name of Snodgrass seemed to change him.

He had at first laughed in a sarcastic way; but now his black eyes glittered like the eyes of a snake, and his lean, bearded face became wolfish in appearance.

Still Reel said nothing. The man seemed to fascinate him.

"Will your friend, this young fellow you're stopping with, be back soon, do you think?"

"Well, I'm not expecting him for an hour or so; but he may come back at any minute."

brought it out of him. Those eyes seemed to scorch to his heart and see everything in it.

So Reel made a full confession, and admitted that he was hanging to Delancy because he could get money out of him and found him useful in many ways.

"And that other young fellow, what was his name—Lightfoot?"

The man's eyes became more snakelike, and he leaned toward Reel, moving his head as if it were the swaying head of one of his cobras.

"By all the gods of India, how I hate that fellow!"

The words came like the hiss of a snake.

"He's here yet," said Reel.

"How I hate that fellow! But for him I should have got away with that money from the safe, all right. But for him I shouldn't have been hunted over the country."*

"Yes, hunted, by detectives. Snodgrass wrote to the Pinkerton Agency, and they put some of their best men on my trail. But"—he laughed—"how could they find Boralmo, the Hindoo magician, when by stripping off these clothes and washing my face and making a few other changes Boralmo was able to drop out of existence altogether?"

He said this lightly enough, but Reel was trembling.

"I should think you'd be afraid to come here, then?"

"Afraid?" He sniffed. "You've seen me do some of my conjuring tricks?"

"Yes; a good many of them."

"You saw me once, in Bombay, disappear from sight in a crowded street, when men were hunting for me, by simply turning my outer garment, changing my turban, and looking like this?"

He pulled the hood of his upper garment round his head, twisted one of his arms around until it seemed still and paralyzed, turned his eyes up until but the whites were seen and they seemed blind and sightless, and elongated his face until it assumed the woeful look of an outcast and beggar of the Bombay streets.

Like a flash he altered in an instant back from the

cringing beggar to the snappy-eyed fakir that he was now pretending to be.

"You saw me do that in Bombay?"

"Yes," said Reel.

This wonderful man always astonished him. He admired him, too; and feared him even more.

"If I could do that—well"—he snapped his fingers—"the Pinkerton detective isn't born that can take me! But"—he shrugged his shoulders—"it's annoying, to be chased that way. But"—he laughed again—"if I was afraid of the dogs would I dare to go over the country boldly giving my exhibitions? I'd go into a hole and hide, wouldn't I? Come over to Cardiff to-morrow night and see me. I shall stand before the whole town—or before as many of the people of the town as will pay to come out to see me."

"But not as Boralmo?" said Reel.

"Oh, no. But as Prof. Mountjoy, the Great English Prestidigitator and World-Renowned Wizard. Am I a wiz? Well, I guess!"

He rocked back on his heels and smiled till his little burning black eyes were fairly concealed by their lids.

"So, that's what brought me here—that is, as far as Cardiff; and I came on over this evening to see you and Snodgrass."

"What are you going to do to him? He's treated me well," said Reel, uneasily.

"Oh, you want me to let him alone! I shan't kill him. I only want some money. I know he keeps it in that little safe in his room. He's a fool to do that. He ought to put it in one of his banks. How much is he worth, anyway? A million?"

"Yes, I think so; perhaps more."

"You ought to thank me for bringing you here, then; for, of course, you'll be his heir; and if I should kill him to-night when I make my call on him, that would hurry you into the inheritance, wouldn't it? I may do that, too. See how many things you have to thank me for! I brought you here, remember!"

"I'd have come without you, I guess."

"Think so?"

"Well, now, why wouldn't I?"

"Because you hadn't sand enough to make the start. I found you there in Bombay, with that old Hindoo,

*For the story of Boralmo's first visit to Cranford, when he brought Reel to the place with him, and of what he did there, see No. 18, "Jack Lightfoot's Dilemma; or, A Traitor on the Diamond." Read it again, if you have it; and if you haven't it, buy that number, for you'll find in the story of Boralmo's entrance to Cranford one of the best stories of the series.

who was dying. You didn't even know about those papers he had."

"I knew he had some papers."

"He thought I was another Hindco magician, one of his caste, and, finding he'd have to quit this world wherein he'd been such a rogue, he gave them to me and told me his story. I did the rest. I took those papers, I learned what was in them; and as they gave directions how to find this rich Snodgrass in America, I brought you here. I was anxious to get out of India just then, you know, for the English Government was hot after me; and we came here together. You were to become Snodgrass' heir. I tried to get a little money out of that safe, and——"

His black eyes burned again.

"Curses on that Lightfoot! He kept me from getting it!"

"You did all the things you say," Reel admitted, "but I'd have found those papers, after the real Boralmo was dead, and would have learned all they had to tell, and would have come here just the same, even if you hadn't chipped into the game."

He spoke with so much fire and spirit that the gaudy figure crouching on the floor stared and pulled at his dyed beard.

"By all the gods of India," he grated, "you would never have been able to do anything of the kind! He would have died with his secret; and, besides, you had at that time so small an opinion of your own ability that you would have stayed and rotted in Bombay, if I hadn't made you get out of there and come. That's the truth, isn't it?"

Before those burning eyes Reel's courage fled away again.

"Well, yes, perhaps it is," he acknowledged; "perhaps it is."

"Perhaps it is? You know it is."

"Well, yes, it is."

"I had to get out of Bombay. I was an Englishman, and if the English Government could have put its hands on me it would have broken my precious neck at the end of a rope."

He sat staring at Reel.

"Tell me something about that fellow Lightfoot,"

he said, finally, rocking back again on his heels. "You were getting along with him fine when I had to cut and run. You were on his ball nine, and sold the signals, and—how did that come out?"

"Have you forgotten?" Reel flashed at him. "You made me sell those signals! Two men came to me who wanted the game thrown to Highland, and they said 'Blondin!' to me; and when I repeated it to you"—he snapped his fingers—"you were scared blue, and ordered me to sell the signals. I did it, and got kicked out of the nine."

The name of Blondin did not seem to set well on Boralmo's stomach. He frowned, and then set his white teeth together with a click.

"He's another fellow—a detective—who's been chasing me!" he said, breathing hard.

Then his manner changed again, he rocked back once more on his heels, and once more asked about Jack Lightfoot.

"You hate him as much as I do Blondin! Don't deny it, for I can see it."

"I do," Reel admitted, bluntly.

Then he added:

"You spoke about being in Cardiff, where you're to give an exhibition to-morrow night. The Cranford nine, of which this Jack Lightfoot is captain, is to play Highland, in the town of Highland, to-morrow afternoon. I wish you were going to be there, instead of in Cardiff; you might help me in some way."

"In what way?"

"I'd like to down him!"

Boralmo smiled until his white teeth shone.

"Help me with my business to-night, and I'll help you with that matter to-morrow."

"I'll do it," said Reel; "that is if—if it isn't something I don't even dare to do."

"You'll do whatever I tell you!" said Boralmo, fiercely. "You'll do whatever I tell you—even if it's to plunge a knife into Snodgrass' heart."

Reel stiffened with some show of courage.

"You couldn't make me do that."

Boralmo's snakelike eyes glittered with sudden anger. He was not accustomed to have Reel defy him.

"See here!" he said, sharply. "I've been easy on you. I asked you for money, and you showed me about enough to buy me a dinner to-morrow. I brought you over here and to this town, didn't I, and to Snodgrass' house; and then you say you could have done those things yourself? But let me tell you something."

He bent forward, weaving his head from side to side as if it were the head of a cobra, while he hissed out the words, and those red eyes seemed boring their fire into Reel's throbbing heart.

"Hear what I've got to say—imp, brat, beggar that you are! Hear me! And be sure now that you are *not* the Reel Snodgrass mentioned in those papers at all. What was your name in India? Answer me that."

"I was called Gunga Singh, but that wasn't my right name; that isn't an English or American name."

"You don't know what your real name was—brat that you are! Who are you? You don't know, yourself! I took you from that Hindoo magician, Boralmo. He had you with him, and was using you to help him beg, and to assist him in his conjuring tricks. Isn't that so? You base-born scoundrel, tell me if that isn't so?"

"Y-yes, I suppose it's so!" Reel stammered, his face as white as chalk now under its coat of tan.

"You suppose it's so? You know it's so! Let me tell you!" he hissed the words, swaying his head and pushing those fiery eyes closer up to Reel's face. "Hear me! I told you that you were the boy mentioned in those papers—that you were the son of a sea captain named Snodgrass, who died in India, leaving a son there; a sea captain who had some money, and had a brother in America who was wealthy. The Hindoo, Boralmo, got the papers and the money—God knows how, I don't—and, years after, you were found strolling round with him. I suppose you've told these people wonderful stories of the fine style you lived in in Bombay?"

Reel winced, for he had done that very thing.

"Before you fell in with the Hindoo you were in an English orphan asylum in Bombay, where you learned all you know in the way of an education. They pun-

ished you, for you were always a thieving and unruly brat; and you ran away; and then you were found by me, with Boralmo. Did he tell you that you were the son of the sea captain?"

"I—I think he did."

"Brat, viper, vampire, don't you know that he didn't? He told you nothing."

"I knew something of what was in the papers."

"And together we got up the scheme to come here, and for you to pose as a Snodgrass, and get the Snodgrass millions—we thought it would be millions; and I was to keep in touch with you, and when you came into those millions we were to divide them, half and half. Viper, scullion, son of a dog, isn't that so?"

He was boiling over with venom, which he spat and gurgled at the youth who cowered now before him in the chair.

"Now, say to me that you didn't need me—that you could have got along without me! Scullery slave that you are! Speak to me in that way, will you! Why, I can write a letter to Snodgrass, and——"

He stopped, gurgling, carried away by his furious passion.

Reel was crouching in his chair, trembling as if he feared this writhing man would leap at him and strike him like the serpent he almost seemed to be.

A step was heard in the corridor.

"Delancy!" Reel gasped. "He's coming!"

As if he were a snake, Boralmo writhed across the floor, slid into the closet, and disappeared from view.

Reel sprang up and turned the key in the lock and shot back the bolt, dropping the key with a flutter into his pocket.

Delancy came in, finding the door slightly open, and dropped calmly into a chair. He was smoking a cigarette.

"Whew!" he said. "It's deuced hot, don't y' know!"

He took up a fan and fanned himself.

"I've been out inquiring round, don't y' know, and if I wasn't afraid to bet against the Cranford nine I could get a lot of wages on that game—aw—don't y' know."

Reel had gone over by the window, which he threw open, and sat where the curtains concealed his face in

a measure. He felt that it must be ghastly white. He was shaking like a leaf and his lungs seemed to be panting. For that reason he did not speak.

"What do you—aw—think about it?" said Delancy.

"I don't know," Reel managed to answer.

"Well, don't y' know, I've lost so infernal much money already, betting against Cranford, that I'm getting weak-kneed."

"Maybe you'd better drop it," said Reel.

Delancy glanced at him.

"Sick, old man?" he asked.

"Well, I—that is, I have a headache."

"Come get a drink."

He rose from the chair, switching his duck trousers with the light cane he carried, and which he had held across his knees.

"Come on. Nothing like a drink to set a fellow up all right, y' know."

"I don't think I care for it," Reel contrived to stammer.

"Then I'll go get one for myself. Funny thing about that, Reel. In winter, when it's cold, a drink will make a fellow feel warm; and in summer, when it's hot, don't y' know, a drink of something cool, y' know, with cracked ice in it, will make a fellow feel cool. Better come and have something."

"Don't want it!" said Reel, desperately.

"I do," Delancy answered, and went out through the doorway.

When he came back, ten minutes later, Reel had in a measure regained his nerve, and the closet was no longer occupied.

Boralmo was gone.

CHAPTER III.

JACK RUNS INTO A TRAP.

Jack Lightfoot stopped and stared with astonishment, as he saw a strange Oriental figure drop into the darkness from a point near the rear stairway that came down from the upper rooms of the Cranford House.

By rare good fortune, as it seemed, Jack had been

passing there, on his way home, at a rather late hour, after making a call on his friend, Lafe Lampton.

The subject of that call can be readily guessed. It was the baseball game to be played the next afternoon with Highland.

"Boralmo!" Jack gasped. "It must be—can't be any other!"

As the figure had vanished in the darkness, Jack moved in the direction it had taken; and being quick of foot soon came again in sight of the crouching form, which was now but a bunch of moving black in the half darkness, for Boralmo kept away from the street lights as much as he could.

The streets were deserted and a mist from the lake made everything dim and ghostly even where the lights shone.

Jack had to act with boldness and caution, in order to keep near enough to this skulking figure to follow it.

But he managed to do so.

He might not have succeeded so well if Boralmo had known he was being pursued; but the pretended Hindoo had no inkling of that.

When he glanced back at intervals, Jack was not to be seen and no figures moved on the streets.

Jack followed Boralmo so closely that he saw him when he entered the yard of the Snodgrass residence, and approached the door.

A light was burning in one of the rooms—Snodgrass' library and reading room—where the eccentric millionaire often sat up until a late hour with his papers and his books.

Instead of ringing the bell, as Jack expected him to do, Boralmo in some manner, to Jack's amazement, opened the door.

"He must have skeleton keys!" was Jack's thought.

Yet Boralmo had been known to do so many mysterious things that Jack was more than half prepared to think he could have gone right through the wood of the door if he had so desired.

He saw the door close behind the crouching figure, but he heard no sound; he had not heard the slightest sound when the door opened.

The white door stared silently at him now, as if it

had not been tampered with, and Jack almost felt that he must have been dreaming.

Then he did a thing which under other circumstances he would not have done.

He ran softly round to the room where the light shone, and stood close by the window.

Near this window he had stood one night a number of weeks before, when Boralmo tried to rob Snodgrass' safe; a thing Boralmo would have accomplished but for Jack's interference.

Jack was sure now that the man was Boralmo, whom he had known as a juggler; and he had no idea but that the man was a Hindoo.

"I don't know but that I ought to go for Tom Kennedy," was his thought.

The idea of eavesdropping did not appeal to him. Besides, if seen there by that window his presence might be misconstrued.

Yet he was afraid to leave for the time necessary to get Kennedy.

So he stayed, while telling himself he ought not to do so; and while still arguing the matter with himself he began to hear voices in the library.

Snodgrass had apparently been taken by surprise by the stealthy and unexpected entrance of the man whom he, also, supposed to be a Hindoo.

Jack heard him start up with an exclamation of astonishment.

Then he heard Boralmo say something in broken English that had a peculiar accent.

"How did you get into this house? And what are you doing here, anyhow?" were the first words that Jack heard.

"Door not closed," said Boralmo, fawningly. "Glad see you. I think of you much since I been away."

"And I've thought a good deal of you, too, you scoundrel!"

"Glad see you," said Boralmo again, and Jack believed he had squatted down on the floor.

He remembered how the first time he had ever seen this strange man he had been squatted on the floor of that room, with a cobra box beside him, and Reel standing near him ready to assist him in his feats of magic.

Jack wondered if Reel was aware of the fact that Boralmo had returned to Cranford, and concluded that he either knew, or that Boralmo had tried to see him at the Cranford House.

Snodgrass was talking again, denouncing Boralmo and threatening him with arrest; and the pretended Hindoo was answering in oily tones.

"I come to tell you something which is ver' gre't int'est to you," purred the pretended Hindoo.

"You scoundrel, if you'll wait here a minute, I'll send an officer to arrest you!"

Apparently he started for the door, but the voice of the magician restrained him.

"Hear first what I say!" he begged. "It mean much to you—much money, much good for the boy, Reel; hear what I have that I would say."

Jack knew that Snodgrass had stopped, and he could imagine that he was looking at the Hindoo crouched on the floor.

"Go on and say it!" said Snodgrass, shortly.

"It concern your brother in Bombay; ver' gre't int'est to you it is, and to Reel. I will tell you."

Apparently Snodgrass had dropped again into his chair and was listening.

"When I first see your brother in Bombay many year ago, he say he haf a brother in dis country. He describe him, and it is you—ver' fine man, ver' good man, ver' rich man. He say, 'you see the boy—he is nephew of this ver' great man in America.' Then he give me the papers, which I haf bring you. You have the papers."

His voice was sinking into a singsong cadence, and Jack knew what that meant.

He knew that if this clever fellow could only get Snodgrass to listen to him a little while he would be able to hypnotize him and so gain complete control over him.

Jack's heart was beating anxiously.

What ought he to do?

Should he rush into the house, after summoning the members of the family by violently ringing the doorbell; or ought he to hasten away in search of Kennedy, the night watchman?

As he debated, hearing that singsong, monotonous

voice in the library, he thought he caught the sound of footsteps on a side street.

"I can send that man for Kennedy, while I watch by the window!"

He moved back softly and then leaped away.

But when he reached the street where he had heard the footsteps no one was to be seen.

Whoever had been walking there had vanished, perhaps by entering one of the houses.

Jack ran back into the Snodgrass yard, and again stepped close up to the window.

He was resolved now, if what he heard convinced him beyond doubt that the magician was trying to get control of the old banker, that he would summon the family by a violent ringing of the doorbell.

But as he thus stepped close up to the window something swished in the darkness, and a silken cord dropped out of the gloom and fell round his neck.

He was jerked backward so violently that the soft cord seemed to cut through to the bone and dislocate his neck, and with a ringing in his ears he became almost instantly unconscious.

CHAPTER IV.

AN UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCE.

When Jack Lightfoot came back to himself he knew what had happened, though he was blind and dizzy, and that cord seemed still to be cutting into his neck with deadening and paralyzing force.

He knew that when he moved away from the window the Hindoo had heard him, and had in all probability come out of the house and laid for him.

What had happened since?

Jack did not know how long he had lain there unconscious.

He tried to get on his feet, reeled around, and fell to the ground again, where he remained, gasping.

He made sure that the cord was not on his neck; for, thinking it was, he had put up his hands and tried to tear it away.

As he lay thus gasping, with his head throbbing and his whole body apparently on fire, he again heard voices in the library.

Reel was in there, talking with Snodgrass.

Jack listened for the voice of the Hindoo, but did not hear it.

The cool dampness of the mist from the lake touched Jack's hot brow and seemed by degrees to revive him.

Finally he sat up, still weak and giddy. When he looked off at the one street light that was visible it seemed to dance up and down and to flicker.

"He came near killing me, I guess!"

Jack felt tenderly of his aching throat.

"I guess I never came so near to having my neck broken!"

Sitting up seemed to make him feel better, and he knew that his mind was clearing.

After a little longer waiting to get back his breath and his faculties, Jack climbed to his feet, and made his way painfully round to the front door.

"Perhaps I ought to go first for Kennedy!" was his thought, as he reflected that Reel was in the house and that Reel was his open enemy now.

But he did not know just where to find Kennedy, and he set his hand to the doorbell.

Its ring went sounding through the house, and brought Reel Snodgrass to the door.

Reel stared as he opened the door and Jack pushed in, staggering, by him.

"What do you want?" Reel demanded. "Are you drunk? Get out of here!"

"I want to see Mr. Snodgrass," Jack panted. "I've got something to say to him—something to tell him."

"He won't see you. It's too late. What's the matter with you anyway?"

"Noth-nothing," said Jack. "I want to see Mr. Snodgrass."

Reel might have turned him out of the house, for just then Reel was so much stronger than Jack that the feat would not have been difficult.

But Snodgrass had heard Jack, and came now out of the hall that led to the library.

He came forward, seeing Jack near the door.

"What is it?" he asked.

"It's Jack Lightfoot—drunk!"

There was a combination of anxiety and sneering scorn in the words.

"Nothing of the kind!" Jack protested. "I'm not drunk—you know I never touch liquor in any shape. Mr. Snodgrass, I want to see you. It's very important."

"Yes! What is it?" said Snodgrass, impatiently.

"There was, you know, a man in your room—in your library—a while ago. It was the same man who tried to rob you once before; and I think he came to rob you again—Boralmo! You remember him. Boralmo, the Hindoo."

"What's this?" gasped Snodgrass.

Reel had turned pale—so pale that his tanned face showed ghastly beneath the hall lamp.

"It's nonsense," said Reel; "the raving nonsense of a drunken fool. Lightfoot, get out of here! How dare you come here, when you've been drinking?"

"I haven't been drinking!" Jack protested, stiffening. "You know I never drink. I understand what I'm talking about, and Mr. Snodgrass knows it's true, too. Boralmo was in that library there a little while ago—not so very long ago, I'm sure. See here!"

Reel's accusation had stung him to indignation, and that had still further cleared his brain and brought him more nearly back to his normal condition.

He put his hand to his throbbing neck, where a red line showed.

"See, there must be a mark here, for I can feel it burning like fire. I was passing the Cranford House, when I saw Boralmo in the shadow of the building near that rear stairway. He came this way, and I followed him. I heard him talking with Mr. Snodgrass in the library. Mr. Snodgrass was threatening to send for an officer. I thought I heard some one passing on the street, and I ran out there to tell him. I didn't find him. When I came back into the yard a rope, or a cord, fell over my neck, and I was thrown down senseless. I don't know how long that was ago, but it couldn't have been long; and it was Boralmo who threw the cord round my neck."

Though Reel was frightened, he maintained his scornful and unbelieving demeanor.

"Ha! ha!" he roared, trying to laugh. "That story shows that you're so drunk you don't know what you're talking about!"

"But Mr. Snodgrass knows that Boralmo was in the library talking with him!"

Snodgrass gave him a queer look.

"Jack, I guess you'd better go on home. You're certainly a little queer to-night."

Jack reeled with bewilderment.

"No one was in there talking with you?"

"Certainly not, except Reel."

Jack stared at Snodgrass.

"Perhaps you didn't know it, or don't remember it; perhaps he—perhaps he hypnotized you."

Reel laughed again, or made a pretense of laughing, in that scornful, sneering way he had used before.

"You don't expect anyone to believe such nonsense, Lightfoot! You'd better go home."

"Yes, you'd better go home, Jack," said Snodgrass, rather more kindly. "You'll wake my wife and the servants. Better go on home—that's a good fellow."

"But I'm sure somebody was in there, and that it was Boralmo," Jack insisted. "See my neck! Would I have done that myself—could I have done it? And, perhaps, he took something. You may find something gone."

Reel shot a wicked look at him.

"If anything is gone, you took it; you must be the thief, if there's been one, for you seem to know so much about it."

"But my throat!" Jack urged.

"Oh, that's nothing! You could run against a clothesline and do that, or you could draw a cord tightly round your own neck and make a mark like that. That's nothing. And," he added, impatiently, "we're getting tired of your nonsense and foolishness. Clear out."

Jack turned to Snodgrass.

"Will you look, please, and see if anything is missing from the library? You know what Boralmo tried to do when he was here before."

Nothing so touched the old banker as an appeal to his money. He had his little safe in that room, in which he usually kept a good deal of ready cash, as well as valuable papers. It was not far from his bed, in the adjoining room. He liked to have some of his

wealth by him, in tangible form; for the same reason, probably, that makes a miser like to finger his gold.

He turned back to the library; and, unlocking the safe by the combination, held a lighted lamp down and looked into it.

A cry of dismay came from him.

Jack passed Reel with a leap, and was in the library, after passing along the hall that led to it.

He saw Snodgrass down on his knees before the safe, the candle shaking in his quivering hand.

"My money!" Snodgrass was gasping. "Gone! It's gone!"

"Then Boralmo took it!" said Jack.

"You scoundrel," Reel shouted at him, "you took it!"

Jack turned and faced him.

There was a blaze in his eyes now that made Reel duck back and put up his hands.

"If you—if you hit me, I'll have you pinched!"

"I don't intend to hit you; but you're a liar and grand scoundrel, 'way down to the bottom of your dirty, black heart, and you know it!" Jack cried. "Say again that I took that money, or know anything but what I have told you, or have said anything here but the truth, and when we meet again I'll settle with you for all your past insults."

He was aroused to a pitch of fiery anger.

He knew he had tried to do nothing but what was right and honorable, and to have Reel meet his efforts in this way simply maddened him.

Reel shrank back against the wall, his face as white as a sheet, wherever its heavy tan would let this whiteness show through.

Snodgrass was gasping over the loss he had discovered, and was digging papers and account books out of the safe as if in the vain hope that he might yet find he had put the money in another compartment.

"We're wasting time here," said Jack, who really wanted to get out of the house, and for some time had been telling himself that he was a fool for having entered it. "Boralmo was here and took that money. I'm sure of it; and he'll get clear out of the country with it, if something isn't done to stop him. Mr. Snod-

grass, with your permission I'll go and get Mr. Kennedy."

Reel interposed again. He did not want to have Boralmo followed.

"If you bring Kennedy here——"

He stopped, for Snodgrass was speaking.

"Jack," he said, rising to his feet and shaking with his emotions, "I don't know what to think of this. Boralmo hasn't been here, but the money is gone. Tell me honestly what made you think the money would be gone, or that anything would be gone?"

"Because he took it himself," said Reel, dodging back to get out of the way if Jack struck at him. "He feared he had been seen near the house, and so he came to the door with that silly lie about it. That's the truth, uncle, and I know it."

Jack was on the point of jumping at Reel, being unable to stand this.

"Jack," said Snodgrass, nervously, "it begins to—to look—very strange! I shall put this into the hands of detectives to-morrow; and if—if you really know anything about it—if you aren't really drunk and imagining what you've told——"

He stopped, hesitating.

"Then you don't believe me?" said Jack, trembling violently.

"I don't know what to believe, Jack; I don't know what to believe. Reel says——"

"Reel's a liar and a scoundrel, if he is your nephew!"

"Jack!" Snodgrass faced him. "I won't have that in here! Reel is my nephew, the son of my brother who died in far-off India, and you must not speak of him in that manner. I think you'd better go home. I really think you've been drinking."

Jack stood trembling.

"All right," he said. "I've tried to do my duty."

"You must have been drinking, Jack. I don't want to think you took that money, but—well, I shall put the matter into the hands of detectives to-morrow, and they'll begin an investigation as soon as they can get here. In the meantime——"

Jack turned back into the hall.

His heart was hammering, his face was flushed, and

that line on his throat seemed still to be cutting to the vertebra.

"All right, I'll go," he managed to stammer. "Good-night, Mr. Snodgrass."

To Reel he said not a word.

Reaching the door he stumbled through it, and then hurried down the street.

He was weak and shaky, and he fairly stumbled as he walked.

CHAPTER V.

SOME OF THE AFTERMATH.

Jack Lightfoot was a very human sort of boy. Was it any wonder, then, that he felt hurt and indignant, outraged in his feelings, by what had occurred?

"Let him lose his money!" he said to himself, thinking of Mr. Snodgrass. "I shan't trouble about it, and I don't care! I've done my last!"

He began to see, too, in what light he would be placed by Reel. That clever young rascal would probably now make Snodgrass believe that if Jack was not drunk when he invaded the house, he was playing at heroics.

Reel knew, of course, that Snodgrass' manner toward Jack had changed in the last few weeks. Before the first coming of Boralmo, Mr. Snodgrass had been Jack's warmest friend and admirer among the business men of Cranford. Now he seldom spoke to Jack, and he came no more to the ball games.

It would be a clever thing for Reel to make Snodgrass believe that what Jack had done that night had been backed by a desire to reinstate himself in that gentleman's estimation.

By rushing to the house and telling that story, Jack—so Reel could claim—had meant to make Snodgrass think he was playing the part of a hero in his behalf.

These were among the thoughts that swept through Jack's whirring mind as he stumbled homeward and made his heart and his head burn.

Jack had never tried to play at heroics. He felt pretty sure he was not a hero, any more than any of the other boys of the town. He was simply straightforward in his thoughts and methods. When he saw

that a thing ought to be done, he did it, without thinking much of the doing then or afterward.

He had acted in that impulsive way in following Boralmo to Snodgrass'.

If he had really been trying to play the hero, the way he had been treated would have been good pay for him; for he was coming away now about as humiliated and bewildered as any tin-canned pup that ever went howling through the streets of Cranford.

Jack reached home and stumbled up to his room.

His mother heard him. She had already retired.

"You're late, Jack. I sat up for you a while. I hope you won't stay out so late again."

"I'll try not to," he promised. "I was kept late; but I'll tell you about it in the morning."

He did not want to tell her that night, for he knew if he did she would not get a wink of sleep, the thing would worry her so.

She had been seriously ill a few days before, but was now on the right road to recovery. Still, she was not yet strong, and he knew she needed all the sleep she could get.

Jack sat down by the open window, looking out toward the lake, where the mist hung thick.

Then he got up and looked at that red line on his neck, in the looking glass, at the same time passing his fingers along it.

He sat down again, and glanced out toward the lake.

He was restless and unhappy.

"Ought I go to Kennedy to-night and tell him about that?"

He decided that he would not.

He would first have to tell his mother why he wished to go out again, and Snodgrass and Reel would deny that an officer was needed.

"Let Mr. Snodgrass look out for his own money!" he said, angrily.

Then he reflected, more calmly, that if Snodgrass had been under the hypnotic control of that master hypnotist, Boralmo, he was not responsible for what he had done.

It seemed a strange thing to Jack, as it will to anyone, that the will of the hypnotizer, if that will is

strong enough, can so control the mind of the person it has influenced that he will not know he has been hypnotized, and will do, even afterward, the thing that has been suggested to him.

Jack believed now that Snodgrass had been hypnotized by Boralmo, and for that reason did not know what had happened, and even did not remember now that Boralmo had visited him.

It was a strange thought; and the whole thing was so startling and out of the common that Jack was kept awake a long time that night, even after he had gone to bed.

But by degrees drowsiness overcame even his excited and active mind.

When he awoke he found he had overslept, and it was broad day, with the sun shining into his room.

He arose and dressed hastily, and went to his mother's room.

She was up, and had descended already to the lower floor.

When he joined her she looked at him anxiously. There was a little of that red line still visible, and her eyes noticed it. She asked about it, and Jack had to explain.

He told her the whole story, from the moment he saw Boralmo until he came home.

"Why didn't you tell me last night, my dear boy?"

He explained why he had not done so.

He could see that she was very much troubled and somewhat excited.

But she was indignant as well—indignant that anyone could accuse Jack of drunkenness and treat him in that way.

Before she was through discussing the matter with Jack, Mr. Kennedy, night watchman and constable, came into the yard.

When he knocked and asked if Jack was in, Jack invited him into the house.

"You'll excuse me, ma'am," said Kennedy, doffing his cap to Mrs. Lightfoot, "but it's a queer tale I've heard, and I thought I'd come down and tell Jack about it, and you, too.

"I don't believe it, of course; that is, I don't believe that about Jack, knowing him so long, you know. But

Snodgrass reports that his safe, the one at his house, was robbed last night. Jack came there, after the robbery, with a story that Snodgrass says is fishy, about how he'd seen that old Hindoo back here again, and that he thought the Hindoo did it. Snodgrass says that he's always thought Jack straight, but this thing stumps him, for he says that Jack claimed that he—that is Mr. Snodgrass—had been talkin' with the Hindoo, when it wasn't so. So he wants me to keep an eye on Jack, and all that—on any money he may spend, and things of that kind. Now it ain't right, of course, for an officer to go to tellin' a thing like that to the feller he's told to keep an eye on; but I knowed Jack had nothing to do with the robbery, and so I says as much to Snodgrass himself. I says to him straight: 'Jack's O K, and wouldn't do a thing of that kind.' And I know he wouldn't. But the other thing stumped me."

He looked appealingly at Jack and his mother.

Mrs. Snodgrass had taken a chair, and looked distressed.

They were in the pleasant sitting room, which faced toward the lake, and the water could be seen through the window. The mist of the night still hung like smoke on its surface.

"I'll tell you the whole thing," said Jack.

And he did, from the beginning, just as he had told it to his mother.

"Snodgrass has wired for a detective or two, I understand," said Kennedy, "and they'll be down here prowling round pretty soon. They'll come to me first thing, of course. I understand this thing now, I think, and I'll put 'em on the right track. I wish I could run across that Hindoo; I'd crack his rascally black head with my club."

He glanced round the room.

"Where's that knife, Jack, that he tried to rip you up with, when he was here before?"

Jack climbed to his own room and got it.

It was a curved blade of Oriental workmanship, a wicked-looking thing, and it had sliced Jack's coat open, when he tried to stop Boralmo there in Snodgrass' yard, after that previous attempt at robbery.

"So he's back here again!" said Kennedy, looking

at the knife. "Well, I'll keep my eyes open for him. If he's in the town I'll find him. It's a funny thing to me that a chap like that, that you'd be sure to notice even in the crowd of a New York street, can get into such a place as this and slip out again without being seen by dozens of people. But maybe others besides Jack did see him. I'll go out and make some inquiries."

He returned the knife to Jack, and after a few further words went away.

Less than an hour later Jack was telling the story of his singular experiences to Lafe Lampton and Tom Lightfoot; and still later he was telling it to Ned Skene and Nat Kimball, and to some other young fellows who came down to the shed room to talk over the game that was to be played that afternoon.

Shortly before noon Jack and his nine and their substitutes went down to the diamond in the fair grounds and practiced up a bit.

There Jack was showered with questions, for the story had spread.

That red line on his neck was still visible.

But Jack did not want to talk of the matter, except to his closest friends. He was not at all sure that he had acted either sensibly or courageously. The whole thing seemed very regrettable, and he was so hurt and indignant that he almost felt that hereafter he would not even stop a robber if he saw him openly going into Snodgrass' safe.

CHAPTER VI.

THE HEROISM OF TOM LIGHTFOOT.

Jack took no part in the search for Borlmo, which many excitable and curious people were carrying on, now that they had heard the story and the report was circulating that detectives were coming to sift to the bottom the mysterious robbery of Snodgrass' safe.

Jack knew that Reel was slyly spreading damaging reports against him; but Jack paid no more attention to this than he did to the furious and excited search for the slippery "Hindoo." He went right on getting his nine into good condition for the game; and when the time came, he set out with them for Highland, riding out of Cranford with them in a big wagon.

A number of Cranford fans had already gone and were halfway to Highland when Jack and his nine started.

The girls, Nellie Conner and Kate Strawn, had ridden over in Delancy Shelton's auto, with Lily Livingston and her mother, Mrs. Randolph Livingston. Delancy "tooled" the machine for them, and felt a supreme sense of his own importance.

Reel had not gone with them.

"Girls are no good," grunted Ned Skeen; "I mean, generally speaking. You saw that crowd with Delancy. Bah! that makes me sick!"

"Sing low, Ned, sing low," warned Lafe Lampton; "remember sweet little Susie with the golden hair!"

Ned Skeen got red in the face, but maintained his ground.

"Well, it's so, isn't it?"

"What's so?"

"That a girl will do about any old thing for a ride in a buggy or an auto, or for a box of chocolates or a plate of ice cream, or a soda. That's so, and you know it. Those girls went by, smiling like sunshine, sitting there with Delancy. He's a fool, and worse; yet they'll make him think he's the whole thing, just because he owns that auto and they get to ride in it now and then. I tell you girls are hypocrites!"

"Whew!" said Lafe. "Take a bite of apple; it's better than ice cream, to cool a fellow down when he's hot."

"I'm not hot," said Ned; "I'm disgusted."

Jack and all the other fellows laughed at him.

"Oh, you're all a set of idiots!" said Skeen. "Howling mackerels, if I couldn't do anything but sit there and laugh like a fool about a thing like that, I'd——"

"Have a bite of apple," Lafe urged.

Ned struck at it and knocked it down into the wagon.

Lafe picked it up, wiped it off, cutting away some parts that were soiled, and again began to munch at it.

Nat Kimball looked at him with alarm and disgust.

"You'll die, one of these days!"

"Sure; when my time comes."

"But this wagon's full of germs; and there you're

hogging down that apple, when it must be covered with them."

"I saw 'em," said Lafe, "but I wiped the bad ones off. Germs are good for me. I eat a million a week and grow fat on 'em. Have a bite."

Nat curled his lips in scorn.

"I wouldn't eat a bite of that apple for a thousand dollars."

"I would," said Lafe, and again set his white teeth into it. "You're a crank on germs, don't y' know. But see how silly you are. When you think there's germs on anything you wipe that thing with your handkerchief, and then you put that handkerchief into your pocket, and carry the germs round with you. Ain't that so? If you want to be consistent, why don't you burn the handkerchief and kill the germs. You take them home with you and spread them over the house. I think your house must be full of germs, for you're always wiping 'em from things into your handkerchief, and then carrying them home in your pocket. Ain't that so?"

Little Gnat wriggled.

"I—I don't think it's so!" he sputtered. "Anyway, I don't swallow them by wholesale, as you're doing now."

"There are good germs and bad germs," said Lafe. "The good germs are good for a fellow. The scientists say so. I eat only the good ones. If you don't believe it look at me. Ain't I as healthy as you are?"

Little Nat couldn't keep up with Lafe Lampton when he began in that way, and he subsided.

Lafe's gurgling laugh rolled out, as the wagon jolted on toward Highland.

It was broken by a woman's wild shriek, from the woods near at hand.

The driver drew in the horses so quickly that the boys were fairly piled on top of each other.

That shriek came again.

Tom Lightfoot was the first out of the wagon, leaping over a front wheel, and running toward the woods, with Jack right at his heels, and the other boys coming on as fast as they could run.

In the woods, at this point, there was a wild gorge; and as Tom ran toward it he saw a woman wringing her hands in agony on the edge of this gorge.

She ran toward Tom, as she saw him coming, and her screams rang out, accompanied by almost incoherent words.

But from them Tom and the other boys learned that her little girl had fallen into the gorge.

Tom ran to the point which the woman indicated, and, throwing himself down on his face, looked over.

He beheld a dizzying sight.

In her fall over the cliff the child had struck in the branches of a crooked tree that grew out from the side of the declivity.

She seemed about to drop out of this, for she was badly frightened, and, it seemed, hurt.

Tom Lightfoot did not hesitate any more than Jack had when he followed Boralmo.

He saw that the little girl could not cling there many seconds, and that if she fell she would in all probability be dashed to death on the rocks below.

There were some vines and tree roots, together with certain inequalities of the rocky face of the cliff; and Tom swung himself over by these; and in another instant, before even Jack had reached the dizzy verge, he was sliding and climbing down toward that swaying tree top.

"Get a rope!" he stopped long enough to shout up. Then added: "Get the lines."

Jack turned and dashed back toward the wagon, which stood in the road in charge of the driver.

"The lines!" he screamed at the driver. "Strip them off! The lines!"

The driver did not comprehend, but stood there staring at Jack as he came running toward the road.

In the meantime, Tom Lightfoot was descending the dangerous face of the precipice.

But Tom was firm of eye and steady of hand.

Yet, if it had not been for his athletic training, if it had not been for the climbing and athletic stunts he had done in the gym and elsewhere, he would not have been equal to this thing; he would not have had the steady brain and the muscles of iron and that grip of steel, which now served him so well.

The woman came screaming to the edge of the gorge, and Lafe took hold of her, for she ventured so near that he expected to see her fall.

All the boys were looking over, except Jack, who had run to the road to get the lines.

And the less steady nerved of them were made fairly dizzy by the sight of that wild descent, where Tom was clinging like a spider to its web and thus lowering himself.

He landed at the root of the tree, shouted an encouraging word to the little girl, and then climbed out to her.

The child was badly scared; but she was not seriously hurt, and clung frantically to his neck.

In thus going out to get the child Tom increased his danger, for while the weight of the child was not great enough to do it, his added weight began to tear the roots of the tree from their holding ground, and the tree began to sink over into the gorge.

He glanced upward with a sudden fear at his heart.

Then his face brightened, for he saw Jack up there with the lines in his hands.

Yet Tom Lightfoot well knew that unless the boys lowered those lines to him in a hurry, he was in for a nasty fall, and it might be a fall that would be fatal.

Jack shot the lines over and began to lower them as if they were a lasso.

He let them slide quickly through his hands.

"Catch 'em!" he said, lying face downward and giving them a swing that took the lower ends into the tree.

The tree was slowly bending over, and the roots were cracking ominously, when Tom caught the lines that Jack had sent down.

He looped them round his body, under the arms, securing them with a quick, yet safe, turn.

"Haul away!" he shouted.

And the lines began to tighten, as the stout-muscled young fellows above began to draw on them.

Tom's weight was lifted from the breaking tree; and, with the child in his arms, he was swung over against the wall.

Then those stout arms above began to draw him and the child slowly up, Tom helping all he could by digging his toes into the crevices of the rocks and catching hold of such vines and roots as offered.

The woman swooned, when Tom and the child were dragged out in safety on the top of the cliff.

"There's a cabin over there; some kind of a house, anyway, in among the trees," said Jack. "Take 'em there."

Then they lifted the woman, and with Tom still carrying the child, the whole crowd hurried to the cabin, a log house of one story and a garret, where they hoped water was to be found, though the house seemed wholly deserted.

CHAPTER VII.

SETTING A TRAP FOR REEL.

But the house was not deserted.

The tanned face of Reel Snodgrass, which had been at one of the broken windows, drew back and disappeared from view when the athletic members of the Cranford baseball nine came in sight.

Unaware of this fact, Jack and his friends bore the woman and child into the house.

"There's an old well out here," said Skeen, "and there's water in it, but we can't get it."

The woman was in a faint, and water was needed.

"Use the lines," said Jack, "if you can find anything to draw the water up in."

He began a search through the cabin, looking for an old pail or pitcher, or anything that would hold water.

He found nothing but an old tin can; but by making a hole in this by driving a nail through it, he fastened it to the lines, and it served very well for a bucket with which to draw up the water.

Jack's manner was now somewhat excited.

The woman recovered quickly, and explained that she had been gathering berries on the edge of the gorge when the child fell over, and that she lived at a farmhouse some distance up the road.

"We'll take you there in the wagon," Tom suggested.

The child still looked big-eyed and frightened, but she did not seem to be suffering otherwise from the effect of her fall.

Jack tapped Tom on the shoulder; and, passing to the end of the cabin with him, whispered:

"Keep still about it, and go away with the whole crowd, leaving me here. Reel Snodgrass is in that cabin, hiding somewhere. I saw him cuddling down behind an old barrel when I was hunting for something to draw water with."

"Then Boralmo is here!"

"I don't know."

"What do you intend to do?"

"I saw a place I can hide in, better than the one he had, and when you go away I'll be in that hole. Then I'll see what Reel's up to."

"And get yourself into trouble. Boralmo will knife you, if he finds you there."

"But I expect you to come right back with some of the fellows. Your going away is to be a pretense. Send some of the boys on with the woman and the child in the wagon. I'll hide there. And then you're to come back, and if Boralmo's here we'll capture him."

"Better try to catch him now."

"Do you think so? He's pretty slippery! And we're not positive he's here, you know."

"We can make a search for him."

Jack stood thoughtfully, digging the long toe of his pitcher's shoe in the sand.

"My idea was that perhaps if they didn't know I was there I might overhear something worth the trouble, while you're gone. Of course, Reel may be alone. It's likely he is. It's probable he saw us coming, and not wanting to meet us dropped down behind that barrel. He may not have known we were coming into the cabin at all."

"Well, it's queer, his being here!"

"Yes, it is."

"Tell you what," said Tom. "You and I will make a bluff of hunting for a bucket, saying we want to draw more water than we can get in that can, or we can pretend that we've dropped the can in the well. We'll go over the cabin, and perhaps we'll jump Reel out. Then we'll capture him and scare him into telling what he's doing here."

"All right, if you think that's best."

To blind the other members of the party to their purpose—for when too many know a thing they're apt to talk and give it away—Tom dropped the can into the well; then he and Jack went into the cabin, where Lafe was questioning the woman.

"Gee! I think I'd like a wash, after that climb I had!" said Tom, speaking purposely very loud; "I dropped that can into the well. Didn't see anything else, any of you fellows, to draw water with?"

"I don't think there's anything else," remarked Skeen.

But Jack and Tom began to search about, making a good deal of noise, and bemoaning their bad luck in not being able to find an old pail.

To Jack's astonishment Reel Snodgrass seemed to have wholly disappeared.

Jack winked slyly to Tom, and dropped now into the hole he had indicated. The cabin was cluttered up with old barrels and old trumpery and broken furniture, and the place Jack hid in was beneath a half-overturned barrel, in a corner, where an old gunny sack hung.

Tom draped this bag over the barrel with a flirt of his hands while pretending to be searching there, and went back to where the boys were standing, most of them out of doors now.

Lafe and Skeen had got the woman out of the cabin, and Bob Brewster was, with the assistance of some other fellows, making a litter for her, in which she might be carried to the wagon.

But she declared she did not need it, as she was strong enough now to walk.

"Where's Jack?" Lafe asked, as Tom came out.

"He went out this way a while ago," said Tom, speaking for the benefit of Reel Snodgrass.

"Why, I didn't see him!"

"Possibly he could have gone on to the wagon, to get it ready."

Then Tom led the way, the boys moving slowly to accommodate their pace to that of the woman.

They were not out of sight before a barrel moved in a corner of the cabin, and Reel came up out of it, rising as if out of a hole in the ground. An old rag was round his head.

Looking through a crack in the barrel that concealed himself, Jack saw this and was amazed, for he had inspected that barrel closely and had seen that old rag lying in the *bottom* of it.

Reel's sudden appearance, out of an empty barrel, was like some of the tricks Jack had seen Boralmio perform, when that clever magician gave an exhibition once in the town hall.

But the explanation was simple enough.

The barrel was set over a hole, and Reel had been hiding under the floor. The rag, dropped into the bottom of the barrel, had concealed this hole.

Every magician's trick is as simple as this, if you could but understand how it is done.

Reel now ran to the broken window and looked out.

"They're gone!" he said. "Funny how they happened to come here!"

Then Jack was given another start.

"If I could have got my hands on that Jack Light-foot and put a knife into him!"

It was Boralmio who had spoken, and he had spoken *good English*.

The voice seemed to come from that empty barrel. Jack had a queer feeling creep up his spine.

"You may have a chance yet!" said Reel. "There goes their wagon. They're driving on toward Highland. Perhaps you'll get a chance at him there."

"I'll be there, all right!" cried the voice. "And if I get a chance to stick a knife into him there, you bet I'll do it!"

"Hello!" said Reel, in a startled tone. "Some of those fellows are coming back! What does that mean?"

Tom, Lafe, Bob Brewster, Saul Messenger, and some of the best athletes and fighters of the nine were returning, to render Jack assistance if he needed it.

Tom had told them, and they were much excited, as could be seen.

"Something's up, sure!" said Reel. "What shall we do?"

"Let's get into the woods; that will be the safest."

Jack saw no one but Reel, and again the voice seemed to come from that empty barrel.

"All right!" Reel replied.

He ran toward the back window, that opened toward the woods.

Jack waited for the Hindoo to pop up out of the barrel, as Reel had, but he did not pop.

Jack saw Reel leap through the window.

Feeling that he was being tricked in some way, Jack now rolled out of the barrel.

He ran to the barrel from which Reel had emerged and looked down into it.

There was no bottom in the barrel, but a hole was there, which apparently went under the floor of the cabin.

Jack pushed the barrel aside and saw that this was so. A hole large enough to admit a human body went down under the cabin floor.

The boys were now at the cabin door.

"Some of you guard this hole!" he cried. "The others this way!"

He sprang through the window, and went down before a club hurled from the underbrush.

Some of the boys rushed to the hole in the floor, and others ran to the window.

The latter saw Jack scrambling to his feet.

"This way!" he shouted again, and dashed into the woods.

But the search of the woods yielded nothing. The thickets were dense, and Reel had been given a fair start.

Jack was puzzled as to the Hindoo, whose voice only he had heard.

But when the cellar below the floor of the cabin was searched, a hole was found there, in the broken cellar wall, and it was plain that the Hindoo had gone through that and thus gained the shelter of the brushy land beyond the cabin.

Jack and his friends had seldom been so disappointed.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DARING OF BORALMO.

In a secluded room in a little-frequented hotel in Highland, a man who seemed to be an Englishman, sat looking from a window.

The man had come to the hotel but a few minutes before, had made some inquiries about the ball game of the afternoon, and then asked for a quiet room, saying he expected a caller soon.

This caller came after a while, being shown up to the room; and he was Reel Snodgrass.

Of course the man was Boralmo.

"What's the outlook?" Boralmo asked.

Reel seemed to fear him, for his manner was conciliatory and meek.

"I can get plenty of bets, for even the Highland people themselves don't feel very sure that their team can win this afternoon."

"At what odds?"

"Two to one, in a good many cases."

"Take all the bets you can get at those odds. Bet against Cranford."

Reel hesitated. He did not like to advise this man, for often that had brought a stinging rebuke. Yet he suggested:

"Unless you know just what you're doing you may lose!"

"I know what I'm doing, unless you show yourself to be a lunkhead. Has your friend, Delancy, come?"

"He got here a long time ago."

"And the Cranford nine?"

"They came in a while back."

Boralmo smiled, while his burning eyes sparkled. Do what he would he could not disguise those blazing orbs.

"They must have had a blooming search for us through those woods!"

"Yes, I think so; they got here late."

Boralmo bored Reel again with his fiery eyes.

"You're pretty well up in the tricks of our profession, I think? Could you manage to use a little drug that I can give to you?"

"Just how?" said Reel.

He had taken a seat and sat looking at the man.

Boralmo took a small phial out of his pocket and held it up. It contained a colorless liquid.

"Well, if you could get even the tenth of a drop of this stuff into the food or drink of the members of that nine they'd be in no condition to play ball this afternoon."

"It would kill them?" Reel gasped.

"No, you fool! If they were dead they couldn't play ball, could they; and if there was no game how could you win those bets I intend to have you make? Do you think you could work it?"

Reel shook his head.

"I'm afraid not. I don't mix with them now, you know."

"Well, why don't you? Do you know you've shown

yourself to be a precious fool since you came to Cranford. When you want to do a fellow up why do you become his open enemy? Would a native of India show so little sense? If you want to do a man injury pretend to be his friend, and then you'll have plenty of chances, and you'll not get into trouble, for he'll never suspect you."

Reel flinched before his words.

"You don't think you can handle this stuff to-day? Well, I can! Find out at once where some of those fellows are. Get a move on you!"

Reel hurried off, and was back within five minutes.

In that short space of time Boralmo had made another change in his appearance.

"Get all the bets you can," he said to Reel, and produced a roll of money.

Reel hesitated again.

"But I'm——"

"Oh, you're afraid to show yourself, now that those fellows from Cranford have come?"

"Well, you know what they saw!"

"Have some nerve, Reel! What did they see? Who saw me, for instance? Nobody. That fellow, Lightfoot, saw you; but he didn't see me."

He gave some of the money to Reel, after counting it.

"I'll fix Lightfoot!" he declared. "I'm going out; and you hustle for bets, understand!"

Reel was a hardened young rascal, but it took all his nerve now to go upon the street and into public places, seeking men who were willing to wager their money on Cranford. Reel was to bet on Highland.

He soon encountered Phil Kirtland, Brodie Strawn, Wilson Crane, Ned Skeen, and some others.

They were standing together on the street, in front of a restaurant.

Phil and Brodie had not been with the crowd that was at the cabin in the woods, but they had heard all about it. They were a bit skeptical about it, too, which had not pleased Skeen and Wilson. And they were speaking of Reel, when he appeared.

"Say, see here!" Phil called to him. "Explain this."

When he heard it from Phil, Reel denied the whole thing.

"Why, the idea!" he cried. "I came over on the train!"

"And weren't at that cabin at all?"

"Not on your life!"

"But you were!" said Skeen, hotly.

"Did you see me?"

"No, but Jack Lightfoot did. I was there at the time—right behind him, when he jumped through that window."

"Oh, that explains it—Lightfoot! Lightfoot can always see things he wants to see. He's got a grudge against me, you know, and that's why he said it. You were there, but *you* didn't see me."

He looked at Skeen, who was fuming with anger.

"I was there, you bet, and so were you! And that Hindoo burglar was with you!"

"Did you see me? Did you see him?"

"No."

"Then you'd better go slow. I'll put you through for slander, if you intimate that I had anything to do with that burglary. Understand that, Skeen."

He turned to Phil and the others.

"I'm betting against you to-day."

He showed some of the money.

"Some fellows here in Highland have so little faith in their own team that they're offering two to one on Cranford. Too good a chance, you know. So, I've got to bet against Cranford."

"You expect us to be defeated?" said Wilson.

"I'm willing to bet on it, that's all."

"Mighty poor taste, I should say, betting against your own town!" said Brodie.

"Oh, I'm simply going against some professional betting men. It's purely a matter of business. You fellows lost at Tidewater, and you lost the game before the last at Mildale. And you'll go under to-day, all right, in my opinion! I'd like to bet on the other side, but I can't see it that way to-day, you know."

"It's mighty poor taste, anyway!" grunted Brodie.

A dapper-looking man came aong.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "let me sell you some exquisite perfume! I have something here that every gentleman should use."

"Don't want it!" growled Brodie.

"Just sample it; permit me!"

The little man poured some of it into a handkerchief and held it under Brodie's nose.

"Take the stuff away!" said Brodie.

"But it is very fine! This bottle is the most exquisite——"

He held the handkerchief under the nose of Phil Kirtland.

"Most exquisite perfume, gentlemen! Let me sprinkle a little on your clothing. Ah! is it not nice?"

"It doesn't smell much like perfume to me," remarked Wilson, sniffing at it. "I don't think I want any of it."

Reel's face had whitened under its tan, but he was still trying to talk to the Cranford young fellows, while this dapper man tried to sell his "perfume."

"Oh, we don't want any perfume!" cried Skeen. "Go along with you!"

"But the exquisite odor!" said the man; and he held some of it under Skeen's nostrils and flirted some of it on his clothing.

"Smells like burned rags!" said Skeen, disdainfully. "How can you expect to sell stuff like that? Take it away! Howling mackerels, take it away; I don't want any of it!"

The man drifted on, apparently much disappointed, but hunting for other Cranford ballplayers; and Reel Snodgrass went in search of men who would be willing to wager good money on the game of the afternoon.

"A wonderful man!" he whispered to himself, as he saw the dapper fellow searching here and there for more victims.

He knew that the dapper man was Boralmo.

CHAPTER IX.

KNOCKED OUT.

Brodie and Phil, and the others with them, went into the restaurant shortly, and there had something to eat.

While they were eating, each was taken violently ill, with vomiting and pains in the stomach.

"It's that confounded meat!" said Skeen.

"Ptomaine poisoning," said Wilson Crane, who was the son of a doctor and knew a few things about diseases. "That meat was tainted."

Brodie, as soon as he felt able to do so, roundly abused the proprietor, claiming that he had served meat unfit to eat.

The proprietor insisted that the meat was fresh.

"Well, look at us!" said Brodie. "Every one of us sick, and we were all right before we came in here and ate your rotten stuff."

"And you know," said Wilson, chipping in, but with his hands held across his paining stomach, "that meat sometimes, in warm weather, gets what they call ptomaines in it. It's a sort of germ poison, I guess. I don't know much about it, but that's what's the matter with us, and I'm betting on it."

Phil Kirtland angrily threatened to sue the man for what had happened.

"Germs!" cried little Gnat Kimball, hearing of it

and rushing in. "Perhaps you fellows will believe in germs after this! You've always been laughing at me——"

"Cut it out, Kimball!" groaned Brodie. "Don't say germs to me—don't say anything!"

Jack did not know of this until some time later.

Brodie and his companions recovered in a measure from the severe pains, after all had visited a doctor, who gave them something in the way of medicine.

But they were still doubled up, with every muscle in their bodies aching and sore, when the time came for them to go upon the diamond and meet the players of Highland.

"A pretty kettle of fish!" grunted Brodie, angrily. "It's enough to make a fellow believe that scoundrelly restaurant keeper put something in our food for the purpose of knocking us out. I wonder if anyone outside of our crowd was poisoned by that meat?"

"There wasn't," said Wilson; "I made inquiries. The restaurant keeper said, too, that that proved that it wasn't anything he had served at his tables."

"It was his rotten old meat, all right! Lightfoot," Brodie looked up at Jack, "I guess we're gone up for this afternoon! I can't go into the game."

None of the boys who had been at that restaurant were able to go into the game.

"Then we're beat before we begin to play!" said Lafe. "Jiminy crickets, fellows, this is tough! Don't you think you can pull yourselves together?"

Brodie, Phil, Ned Skeen and Wilson Crane, four good players, with one or two of the best substitutes, were knocked out.

CHAPTER X.

THE WEAKENED NINE.

When Jack Lightfoot looked at his batting list he was genuinely discouraged. This is what he had to hand in to the umpire; and the list, also, that was given in by the Highland captain:

CRAFORD.

Jubal Marlin, 3d b.
Nat Kimball, ss.
Mack Remington, lf.
Tom Lightfoot, 2d b.
Bob Brewster, rf.
Saul Messenger, cf.
Connie Lynch, 1st b.
Lafe Lampton, c.
Jack Lightfoot, p.

HIGHLAND.

Perlie Hyatt, cf.
Sol Russel, p.
Tom Johnson, 3d b.
Bill Miller, lf.
Kit Carver, 1st b.
Ben Yates, 2d b.
Link Porter, rf.
Phin Hester, ss.
Cale Young, c.

Brodie Strawn, the reliable slugging batter, was not there.

Phil Kirtland, a fine all-round player and good batsman, was not there.

Wilson Crane, who could run like an antelope, was a fair batter and fine center fielder, was not there.

These were some of the best men in the nine.

And Ned Skeen, who was one of the finest short-stops Jack had ever seen work, was not there.

Little wonder that Jack felt discouraged.

"Cheer up, old man!" said Lafe, who saw how cast down Jack was.

"All right, I will! But it's tough, Lafe! Just when the game is to begin, to have this happen!"

Lafe smiled.

"If they'd eaten apples now, instead of meat, it wouldn't have happened."

Jack put his hand on Lafe's shoulder and walked on with him.

"Perhaps we aren't so bad off," he urged. "We'll have to work the battery harder, old man."

"And we've still got some mighty good men on the list," said Lafe, optimistically, for he wished to cheer Jack. "Now, if one of those poisoned meat fellows had been you!"

"Or you! My end of the battery wouldn't be much without the catcher."

"Just send 'em in any old way, this afternoon, and I'll promise to hold 'em!"

He took out an apple.

"Have a bite!" he said.

"Oh, I don't need it!"

Jack laughed.

It was what Lafe wanted.

"You see how good apples are; just offering you one set you to smiling." He slapped Jack on the shoulders. "Old fellow, I tell you we're all right! Just brace up, and tell the boys that we're all right."

"I'll do it."

Jack did; and it flattered the substitutes who had been put on, to see that Jack did not seem to feel cast down, but rather appeared to think they could do almost as well as the men who had been knocked out.

A great crowd was streaming into the ball grounds and climbing to the grand stand and bleachers, as well as scattering over the field and grouping back of the diamond.

Delancy was there with his auto, and the Cranford girls were present, with the ribboned mascot, Rex.

In this crowd was a man of English appearance.

He was Boralmo.

He looked about, and drew his hat well down over his fiery eyes as he scanned the grounds and the players. He rubbed his lean, brown hands together softly.

"Reel's put out nearly a thousand dollars in bets at good odds!" he whispered. "I'll rake it in—I'll rake it in!"

Then the game opened up, with Cranford at the bat, and Jubal prancing out with his two sticks, and that wide grin on his Yankee face.

"Jist gimme easy ones," he begged in his old way of the Highland pitcher, "and see how I can knock the ole kiver off of 'em!"

And Sol Russell began to send the sphere whistling over the rubber.

CHAPTER XI.

JACK'S SPIT BALL.

The discovery that some of the best players in the Cranford nine were not able to play had a wonderfully inspiring effect on the Highland boys.

They believed, with the Cranfordites, that the Cranford players had been poisoned by the meat, or by something they had eaten at that restaurant.

No one dreamed that the quiet Englishman who sat in the crowded bleachers was the evil spirit who had wrought this woeful change to Cranford.

Reel Snodgrass did not show himself near the diamond until the game was well under way, and then he stood back in the crowd that pushed close to the benches.

Everything was going to his satisfaction. And he might have been quite happy, but for the heavy fear, almost terror, in which he stood of Boralmo.

He saw Boralmo in the bleachers, and glanced inquiringly in his direction at intervals, and sometimes caught a gleam of those fiery eyes.

The game was going against Cranford.

Five innings had been played, and the score was six for Highland and two for Cranford.

One of these two runs had been made by Lafe.

The other had been made by little Gnat Kimball, who had been pulled across the home plate by a two-bagger which Jack drove into right field.

Little Gnat felt highly pleased with that run, and more than pleased with the compliments bestowed on him by Jack.

And Kimball had done clever work, in first getting a

single, and then in stealing second bag; so that Jack felt that he deserved warm praise for it. Jack was bestowing praises generously wherever he could, knowing that he must keep up the courage of his rather weak nine.

Mack Remington now secured a hit, in the seventh, and was brought home by a great three-bagger, which Lafe slammed to the ball-ground fence.

Tom Lightfoot, following Lafe at the bat, brought Lafe home.

Thus two more runs were made, bringing the number up to four for Cranford.

But Bob Brewster, following Tom Lightfoot, drove a ball straight into the hands of the pitcher; and, being third man out, the run-getting ended for that inning.

Jack's hopes were rising again, when he went into the box, in the second half of this inning—the seventh.

Jack was using the spit ball as he had never used it before, and he now struck out the first man up.

But the spit ball was a treacherous thing to handle. Jack was never thoroughly able to understand it himself. All he knew was that when he could control it perfectly it was a terror to the batters, for it increased the curves and had a wonderfully sharp drop right in front of the plate, so sharp a drop that almost every batter struck over it, or missed it.

He knew, in addition to this, that it gave a wider outcurve, a greater in-jump with an in-shoot, and more speed generally with every sort of ball he threw.

And all he did to secure this was to moisten one side of the ball with saliva, and throw it just as he would throw any other ball. It fooled him sometimes, by not curving at all. But, in doing that it also, as a general thing, fooled the batter at the same time.

Jack Chesbro, the famous pitcher, who uses the spit ball so much and so effectively, says, as a theory, it is probable that the air piles up denser against a wet ball than against a dry one, and so gives it more effectiveness; but he isn't even sure of that. All he knows is that it does the work for him.

And that was about all Jack knew.

Perhaps it is all anyone knows.

There was one thing which Jack had discovered and which kept him using the spit ball—with almost every game he was better able to control it.

Knowing how much depended on him and Lafe, he was using it in this game for all it was worth.

Pitching now to the second man at the bat, the ball went nearly straight, and the batter got it this time, driving it as a hot grounder through the hands of Nat Kimball, at short.

Nat hustled after it like a chicken after a grasshopper, with the Highland fans howling like maniacs.

They had done a good deal of howling that day, and had their throats rasped by this time, so that their yelling was a hoarse roar.

Jack struck out the next man with the spit ball, making two men down.

But the next batter slammed a "wind-jammer" into deep right, catching a wide curve on the end of his bat, and the Highland fans opened out again in another hoarse roar.

The runner from first went to third on that two-base hit.

The next batter up Jack struck out; thus making three men who had gone down before the spit ball in that inning.

And no run had been made by the Highlanders.

Jubal came up again, in the first half of the eighth, laughing as usual.

The pitcher sent a hot one over; and Jubal, instead of being hit, was hit by the ball, as he tried to get out of the way of it.

Jubal was fairly knocked down, but he went to first, declaring that his constitution was shattered. Jubal would have his fun even while being killed.

Nat Kimball followed Jubal; and Nat went out, as he usually did.

After that, apple-cheeked Mack Remington went out in the same disconcerting way.

Tom Lightfoot took up the timber, with two men out; and Jubal gained nerve and strength enough to creep out from first bag.

Tom drove the ball into right field, and took second; while Jubal galloped along to third and started for home.

Tom went on to third, when he saw Jubal leave the bag there, for the right fielder threw to the home plate.

But Jubal was safe, on a slide.

Tom did not score; for Bob Brewster now went under, making the third man out.

But the score had been advanced, and was now five.

Then Jack, trusting to the spit ball again, struck out three men straight.

And the ninth inning opened, with Cranford at the bat, and the score standing—six for Highland and five for Cranford.

CHAPTER XII.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S IRON ARM.

It will be remembered by those who read the story that preceded this, that Jack Lightfoot and some of

his nine had come back from the Maine woods, where they had had some wild experiences in running the rapids of icy rivers, in a pretty well-used-up condition.

Jack's arms and shoulders were so sore that in one game, against Tidewater, he could not pitch at all. Phil Kirtland pitched in that game, and the Tidewater Tigers simply ate up the Cranford nine.

Then Jack had gone into the pitcher's box against Mildale, the poorest nine in the league, with his arm in no better condition, and the Mildale pitcher, who was a new man and a wonder, had put it all over him.

A few days later Jack again met this Mildale pitcher in a second game, and had defeated him; and the Cranford nine had, at Mildale at least, regained their lost prestige, after a hot fight.

All those things were now more than a week old.

In the meantime, Jack had been doctoring his arm. He knew how to do this, and how to take care of it. A pitcher's arm is his capital, and he must handle it lovingly.

Jack also knew how to save his arm, with the body and shoulder swing, putting much of the work of pitching on the body and shoulder, and thus saving the arm muscles.

And now, for all that the pitching of the spit ball called for all this strength and skill, his arm had regained its strength; and was like iron, in this game with Highland. He had used the trying spit ball right through, and his arm was standing up to the work in great shape.

There was another thing Jack Lightfoot had learned, by much observation, and he was working it in this game, where he was so hampered by a poor nine made up so largely of inferior substitutes.

He had learned that it is possible to make the batters do, to a large extent, what a clever pitcher wants them to do.

This was in the line of headwork, and Jack believed in headwork for the pitcher's position, as well as for every other position on the ball field.

By studying the batting style of the Highland men he knew which among them were likely to strike high.

On such men he worked the spit ball with a sharp drop in front of the plate.

When batters were trying to sacrifice he kept the ball high, as he had found that it is hard to make a place hit on a high ball.

When a batter had a habit of standing as close to the plate as was allowable, Jack put the ball close in to his body. That made him strike it, if he got it, with

the handle of the bat, and he could not place it, or do much with it. More often the batter missed it.

For batters who stood well away from the plate Jack gave the spit ball with a wide outcurve. When they did not miss this ball, they caught it on the tip end of the bat, and could neither control it nor send it out with much force.

There were many things of this kind that Jack had figured out for himself, by clever headwork, and he found them useful now.

The ninth inning had opened with Saul Messenger at the bat.

Saul always looked like a pugilist, as he came into position, with his wheatlike shock of yellow hair, his heavy shoulders hunched, and his heavy, pugilistic jaw thrust out, and an air of do-or-die in his face.

Saul could seldom connect with the ball that the Highland pitcher sent in, and he had no better luck this time.

"If we only had Brodie, and Phil, and Skeen at the bat now!" Tom muttered, when he saw Saul strike out.

Alas! those batters were still groaning in the benches, almost too sick to see. The drugged "perfume" which Boralmo had held under their noses had done its work well.

Connie Lynch, the blue-eyed Irish lad, struck out, like Saul Messenger.

"It's all up!" groaned Skeen, who could still see and knew what was happening, even if he could not do anything more.

It looked so. This was the ninth inning, and two men were out. Not a run had so far been made in the inning, and Highland was already in the lead.

Lafe Lampton took up Old Wagon Tongue.

Before doing so Lafe took a bite of apple, as if it were a stimulant; and hitched his trousers, like a sailor, as he stepped into position.

The Highland fans were yelling for the purpose of "rattling" him.

But—old Lafe drove the ball for all he was worth.

It was so great a hit that it brought the Cranford fans up standing, and gave them reason to yell with all their might, for it was going for the ball-ground fence.

"Over the fence!" some one howled.

But it was not over the fence.

The fielder was flying after it, and Lafe was flying for second, which he took easily.

With two men out, it was too great a risk to try to get third, and Lafe stopped, knowing that Jack was now to come to the bat.

Sol Russell wound-up with a terrific swing, and shot the ball to Jack with all his might.

Jack let it go by.

It was not what he wanted, and he was a good waiter; and in his experience in the pitcher's box he had found that a good waiter is a trying proposition to the slabman.

"One strike!" said the umpire.

The Highland fans again shouted their hoarse yell. They were sure now that Highland must win.

As pleased as anyone was Boralmo.

He knew the fine points of the game, and had watched it closely.

His only regret all through it was that he had not been able to knockout more of the Cranford players with his "perfume." He had discovered that some very good men were left, and that if the game was won by Cranford it would be through the stick work, battery work and fielding of these men.

He was particularly sorry he had not been able to knockout Jack Lightfoot.

He could see that it was Jack's pitching and his fielding from the slab that was telling, and was the chief thing that had kept Highland from piling up more runs.

Yet, on the whole, Boralmo was now, as the game neared its end, pretty well satisfied.

He did not see how Highland could lose.

They were one run ahead, and would have the whole second half of the inning to even things at the bat if Lafe made a run now and tied the score, or even if two runs should be brought in.

He looked round for Reel.

Reel was staring at him, but turned his face away when he beheld those fiery eyes turned on him.

"Ah! if that fellow had but a little nerve," was his thought. "If he had Jack Lightfoot's nerve! It takes nerve, backed with skill, of course, to carry off things in this world. But I'll pull nearly two thousand dollars out of the baseball gamblers who have gathered here to-day, and I ought to be satisfied. That, with what I took from Snodgrass' safe last night, and whatever I may be able to pick up from my exhibition at Cardiff to-night, ought to satisfy me."

He stroked his beard complacently.

It was not black now, and there were no wavy kinks in it. And his hair was not black, but a soft brown. The dark stain was gone from his face.

He turned his fiery eyes on Jack Lightfoot at the bat, and watched him and the battery, and smiled, when he saw that the fielders were away out.

"They're afraid of that chap! Well, they've a right to be! He's a good one. What a fool Reel was to antagonize him openly. He ought to have made that fellow believe that he was the best friend he had in the world. And then he could have used him. Now, they're at sword's points. Reel's a fool."

The ball was coming in again.

Jack seemed about to strike at it.

But, again, he let it go by.

"One ball!" Boralmo heard the umpire shout.

A little later he heard:

"Two balls—and one strike!"

Lafe had been playing off second, watched closely by Russell, the pitcher, and by the man behind the bat.

Lafe did not intend to run the risk of a steal; he was merely trying to get well out from the base, to be ready for that wild dive he intended to make for third when Jack connected with the ball.

Again the ball came in; and Jack did not strike at it.

"Three balls!"

Sol Russell was so afraid of Jack's batting ability that he was putting the balls too far out.

Jack smiled.

He knew that Russell would get the next one in; and he knew, too, that Russell was getting nervous. He had been in just that position so many times himself that he could tell how the pitcher would feel.

Russell, being afraid that "four balls" would pass Jack to first, put the sphere now right over the rubber; but swiftly, and with a curve.

It was the ball Jack had been patiently waiting for. He lifted it.

A wild yell broke from the Cranford fans when they saw that ball shoot into the air from Jack's bat and go sailing like a bird or a bullet.

Ned Skeen forgot the cramps in his stomach and the terrible bass drum that had been booming under his skill.

He leaped to his feet, and stared, open-mouthed, at the speeding ball.

"She's going over the fence!" he screeched, unable to contain his feelings. "See her go! See her go! Howling mackerels, see her go!"

The runners were going, as well as the ball; and the fielders were going, too. The center fielder and the right fielder were sprinting, and the shortstop was getting out, to be ready to receive the ball when it was thrown in.

"Over the fence!" was roared from grand stand and bleachers, where the people were standing up and yelling in their excitement.

Over the fence the ball had gone, dropping down out of sight.

And Lafe and Jack came in, bringing two runs.

Boralmo groaned with disgust.

"A run ahead now!" was his thought.

Then he took courage again.

"But that will end their run-getting. They've got two men out, and those two fellows were about the best batters on their list. That will end their run-getting; and when Highland comes to the bat they can pull in something, I'm sure."

Yet he had been made nervous.

The Highland ballplayers had been made anxious, too.

And the Cranford fans were howling.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW THE GAME WAS WON.

"Hooroar! Haw, haw!"

Jubal Marlin came to the bat, swinging his two bats, and then casting one away.

Jubal had begun to think that this was some sort of a luck-getter.

He was a left-handed batter, and turned his right shoulder toward the pitcher's box as he lifted Old Wagon Tongue.

He laughed again, bellowing out his guffaw, and patted the end of the bat.

"Give 'em tew me right there; easy ones!"

Sol Russell stood twirling the ball round in his fingers.

That great over-the-fence hit of Jack Lightfoot had made Sol very nervous.

"Don't hit me ag'in!" Jubal begged, for he had received a pass to first that way in this game; "er, if yeou do, hit me easy! I'm lookin' fer things that air easy."

"Cork up your mouth and attend to business!" was the curt order of the umpire; and Jubal subsided, though he still continued to grin.

The ball came over once, twice, three times.

Jubal seemed to have taken a lesson from Jack and to have become a waiter.

Two of the three were "balls," and that suited him.

Russell, fearing the batter, though Jubal was not the best in the nine, was putting them wide out; and when he tried to throw wide balls to a left-handed man he was not a great success.

Seeing that he was giving "balls," he tried to get them close in, and came near hitting Jubal.

Jubal dodged and roared out his laugh.

The next ball struck him, in spite of his attempt to get out of its way; and Jubal had again drawn a painful pass to first.

Nat Kimball took up the timber.

"Oh, if either Brodie or Phil were in that place now!" thought Tom Lightfoot.

His fears were well grounded.

Little Nat did the best he could—and struck out.

The side was out, the run-getting was ended; and, with a series of wild whoops, the eager Highlanders came bounding in from the field.

They were to have their chance now.

Cranford was but one run ahead—the score being seven to six.

"Do 'em up now, old man!" said Lafe, patting Jack affectionately on the shoulder. "Work that old spit ball again, and you'll do it. I'll hold it, no matter how it comes."

He put on pad and mask, and squatted behind the batter, looking through the bars of the mask, with his hands on his knees, his legs bent, and his feet well apart.

He saw Jack moisten the ball and wind-up for the throw, and saw the wet sphere shoot through the air with almost the speed of a bullet.

It was no easy thing to hold Jack's throws when they came that way, and the spit ball had a tendency to slip and pop out of the catcher's mitt.

But Lafe was equal to it.

He was like a stone wall behind the batters, and seldom did anything get by him.

"One strike!" said the umpire.

The Cranford fans yelled; and the mascot, coached by pretty Kate Strawn, barked loudly.

Again Lafe saw that wind-up, and saw the ball shoot in; with a different curve, this time.

The batter, in desperation, drove at it.

Plunk!

It was safe in Lafe's mitt; and he was rising to send it back.

"Two strikes!" said the umpire, his voice thrilling a little in spite of himself.

Again that yell broke from the Cranford enthusiasts, and again the mascot tuned up with his barking.

Once more Lafe crouched and looked expectantly through the bars of the mask.

Two batters had gone down before that spit ball.

It was coming again, he knew.

Again he saw the familiar wind-up, and saw Jack

shoot the spit ball out of his fingers, making a great swing with arm, shoulder and body.

The speed was something terrific; Lafe saw that, and braced for it.

It was straight over the rubber, with a wonderful drop.

The batter knew he had to swing; and he swung, in wild desperation.

Plunk!

Once more it was in the mitt of reliable old Lafe; once more that Cranford yell was rising; and once more the umpire was shouting, while his voice quivered:

"Three strikes; you're out!"

And the game was over, with Cranford one run in the lead.

Highland had failed to make "good" in that last inning, and had gone down like hay under the blade of the scythe before that whistling spit ball, fired by Jack Lightfoot's iron arm.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

The rage of Boralmio was almost choking him.

He panted and gasped, and his fiery eyes flamed.

He fairly threw himself out of the bleachers.

His hand went to the pocket which held his knife.

"No, no!" he gurgled. "That will not do! I should be pinched, and it would be all up with me!"

He almost fell, as he struggled in the crowd.

But no one heeded him.

Grand stand, bleachers and ball grounds were ringing with cheers, and people were almost trampling on each other in their excitement.

Ned Skeen had again forgotten the cramps that had distressed him, and was dancing with joy in front of the benches.

Brodie and Phil and all the others, also ignoring their condition, were pushing out to where Jack stood, anxious to take him by the hand.

Jack and Lafe had saved the day, aided by the good stick work of Tom and Jubal.

"Howling mackerels, I shall die of joy!" Skeen was gasping.

"Shake, Jack!" said Phil Kirtland, his envy and jealousy forgotten for once. "I wish I could have been in that to help you, but I couldn't; and you did great work!"

"Lightfoot," cried Brodie, thrusting out his brown paw, "you're all right! If I've ever said anything different I take it back to-day."

And Lafe was receiving praise that was equally strong, equally deserved, and equally pleasant, not only from the Cranford nine, and their friends, and the the Cranford fans, but from many other people—people of Highland, who were able to appreciate good work no matter who did it.

Delancy whirled up on the outskirts of the crowd with his red devil auto, and the Cranford girls who had come over to Highland with him trooped, or rather crowded, out to meet him, after telling Jack how wonderful his pitching had been.

Skeen looked at them with disgust marking his face.

"That's the fly in the ointment!" he grunted, and doubled up again and dropped into the benches. "Why can't girls have some sense; why can't they forget a ride, or anything like that, and show a fellow like Delancy that even an auto can't buy them?"

Skeen was fuming thus when he heard his name called.

He looked up.

Susie Powers, of the golden hair, stood there, smiling and extending her hand.

Skeen's face grew radiant.

"Glad to see you—glad to see you!" he said, beaming with joy.

And he forgot his cramps, forgot that girls are "awful," and gave himself up to the happiness of the moment.

* * * * *

Jack was moving along with the crowd, in the direction of the town, when he heard a voice.

He stopped and glanced round.

He saw an Englishman near him, and the Englishman had said something to a man who had jostled him.

Jack stared into the face of the Englishman.

The Englishman's fiery eyes saw this scrutiny.

Jack seemed to be about to move toward him, or leap at him.

A knife flashed in the man's hand; but, instead of using it, he turned and writhed through the squirming crowd like an eel sliding through a man's fingers.

Jack stared and began to follow.

It did not seem possible, yet the thought had come to him that this man's voice strangely resembled Boralmio's.

And there was the further fact that the man had seemed so anxious to get away in a hurry.

Jack pushed on, panting and excited, called at by some of his friends, who did not understand what he was trying to do.

But the Englishman had vanished.

"Oh, he couldn't have been the same!" thought Jack. "This was a white man and the other was a Hindoo! But it was funny, the way he got through the crowd, when he saw me looking at him!"

He saw Reel.

Reel seemed to be looking in the direction this Englishman had been going.

Jack moved up to him, and tapped him on the shoulder.

Reel turned round with a start, and his face paled. "What do you want?" he snarled.

"Glad to see you again," said Jack, with a peculiar smile. "You remember when I saw you in that cabin this afternoon, and Boralmio, your old friend, the Hindoo, was under the cabin floor! Well, there goes a man who has a voice very like his."

He pointed in the direction the man had taken, and at the same time studied Reel's face.

It had paled to a ghastly mixture of white and sunburned tan.

"Lightfoot, I guess you're crazy—or drunk! Your head is as much out of gear as it was when you came to my uncle's claiming you had heard Boralmio talking with him in the library. I think you'd better see a doctor."

He moved away.

Jack rejoined his friends in a few minutes, but said nothing to them of the Englishman; though, later, in talks with Lafe and Tom, with Skeen and some other of his intimates, he told what he had seen, and what Reel had said, and how he had looked and acted.

* * * * *

The next day, at Cranford, Reel Snodgrass was given a start that was even more nerve-thrilling than the one which Jack had given him.

The Pinkerton detectives, whom Snodgrass had wired for, had been in Cranford, "looking round."

They had interviewed Jack and some of his friends; they had talked with Snodgrass; and they had done a good deal of peering and prying and general questioning.

As a result, they came to some remarkable conclusions; which will show how even the shrewdest of men may go astray, when they trust to "theories," instead of to facts.

They had reached the conclusion that Jack Lightfoot, for some purpose they could not fathom, had lied, and had not heard anyone talking with Snodgrass, and had not seen the Hindoo.

Snodgrass had assured them that no one had called on him and that no one even remotely resembling the Hindoo had talked with him.

That, very naturally, disposed of Jack's statements.

They would not believe Jack against the man who had hired them to come there and look into the theft of the money from the safe.

Among others whom they had closely questioned was Reel Snodgrass.

And now they faced Reel, in the presence of Snodgrass himself.

"There, Mr. Snodgrass," said the one who was spokesman, "is your thief—the one who took the money from your safe!"

Reel, of course, wilted. He shook with fright, and denied it lustily.

"You're making a mistake here, gentlemen!" protested Snodgrass, indignantly. "You have got the wrong person."

"We don't think so. He's told us a dozen different stories about this thing, and he turns white and wilts whenever the subject comes up. Those are evidences of guilt; and he's the thief—the burglar."

Again Reel denied, shaking with fright.

Then Snodgrass flew into a rage.

"Gentlemen," he cried, "your services are dispensed with! If all you can do is to bring this cruel and unjust charge against my nephew, and disgrace the very name of Snodgrass, I think you'd better go back home."

And they went, when he had paid them generously for their "services."

Reel was ready to pat himself in approval, when he knew they had gone.

"But, great guns," he muttered, "that was about the narrowest squeak I ever had! Yet," and he smiled, "it seems to me I'm still on top. Anyway, I'm still safe. And I hope Boralmio won't be in a hurry to come here again. I couldn't stand very much more of that."

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 28, will be in an entirely different vein, being a stirring story of gymnasium work, entitled "Jack Lightfoot On the Mat; or, The Jiu-Jitsu Trick that Failed to Work." In this story our young friend is brought into contact with a Japanese professor of wrestling, and Gnat Kimball has the time of his life in watching how his pet theories turn out in actual practice. You will be pleased with this number of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY.

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

I have been buying ALL-SPORTS ever since it started. I have a little boy ten years old, who never forgets, when Saturday comes, to march down, proud as a peacock, to get the latest number of ALL-SPORTS. He is very much interested in Jack, and tries to live up to his character. I think Jack is a splendid example to every American boy. I have not seen any letters from Conception yet, but I can safely say that all the best boys in town read it. I am very well pleased with all of Jack's friends, especially with Tom. Lefe also is a nice boy, although I should be worried if my boy ate the way he does. He will ruin his digestion. I hope he takes a cup of hot water before breakfast every morning. That is an excellent cure for such trouble, and I recommend it to all my friends. Also, avoid pastry and rich cooking. I hope Phil Kirtland, who must be a nice boy at bottom, will finally become friends with Jack. When my boy gets old enough, I am going to send him to college. What college would you recommend, and where is Jack going? I have not said all I should like to say, but I will write again, if I may. Regards to Mr. Stevens.

Mrs. L. E. Z.

Conception, Mo.

We shall always be glad to hear from you, dear madam. It is a matter of pride to us that we have the indorsement of the mothers of our readers. As to selecting a college, we cannot pretend to give advice on this matter. Moreover, it will be some years before your boy will be ready, and he will then probably have a pretty clear idea himself where he wants to go. Jack's intentions in going to college we do not know. That is a matter the future narratives only will make plain. Many thanks for your kind suggestions. Mr. Stevens sends regard to you and to your little boy.

Noticing the large amount of correspondence that passes through your hands, showing that the ALL-SPORTS weekly is increasing in favor throughout this country, I herewith inclose you a few words from one who places a high value on your efforts. The athletic man to-day stands first in the eyes of the boy who aspires to be anything; I have found it so by taking into account the attention paid by the youth of the nation to the great college and professional contests in various sports and their eagerness to witness the same, that they may learn how to do it themselves by observation of the best examples. Of the meaning of this training they know nothing, and your weekly, in showing them the high moral trend of all sincere amateur sport, is doing a great work. You are opening the way for all men to see just what kind of men are successful, and what it means to be a man in the light of an American. An earnest wisher of your success,

JOHN C. REDDIN.

Denver, Colo.

The value in ALL-SPORTS you have pointed out is certainly a great one, and we hope that our weekly may have the beneficial effect in this way it should have. Many thanks for your expression of appreciation.

I thought I would write to you and let you know what I thought of your ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY. I think it is the best ever, and I think Jack and his friends are all fine fellows. The boys of our neighborhood have formed a club, and we have followed the example of the Cranford boys, going in for gymnastic work and forming a baseball club. We have a little apparatus and are saving up for more. Some of us belong to the Y. M. C. A. and have had gymnastic training, so that we can instruct the others. How do you throw the spit ball, and what is it? What do you think of my measurements? I am 14 years old and 5 feet 2 inches in height. My weight is 103 pounds. My chest expansion is 31 inches; waist girth, 25 inches; hips, 31 inches, and calf, 12 inches. I have practiced regularly and take good care of myself, going to bed fairly early and getting up at six every morning. I also take a cold bath daily, which I think is very good. Best wishes to all.

Columbus, Ohio.

STEVEN KAMPS.

Your measurements are excellent, Steven, and show the result of training and care for one's self. You are doing an excellent thing in helping the boys of your neighborhood to train themselves. We wish you every success. By the time this letter is printed you will have read, in our "How To Do Things," a discussion of the spit ball, how to use it and its value.

I have been reading ALL-SPORTS for the last few weeks, and have come to like it very much. The stories are well told, and every detail is made plain to the reader. The characters, too, are very good. But there is one thing I do not understand, and that is why every author who writes a story about a group of boys makes the leader the kind of a boy that never grew on sea or land. From the description given in the list of characters, I thought that Jack was just an ordinary sort of fellow, who had his weak points, and who tried to overcome them. But I haven't seen anything of such a character in the stories. The Jack Lightfoot of the stories is just a fellow who was born first in everything, can do everything, from play ball to preach, without any previous practice and to the amazement and admiration of all beholders. It seems rather silly to me the way we are led to believe that Jack can occasionally fail; he was of the kind that couldn't fail—the author wouldn't let him. Now, I think that is a mistake. I think that the stories lose in interest if the character is too perfect. Fellows who do everything fine, and who have strong prejudices and a keen sense of what is proper, are not a bit pleasant in real life, and among any decent fellows would be chuckled in the head until the swelling came down, and I don't think they are any more interesting or valuable in a story. I suppose the author has some purpose in view in making his characters as he does, and that my remarks may be considered quite uncalled for. But I like the idea of ALL-SPORTS, and since I have been seeing critical letters in "A Chat With You," I thought I would take the liberty of writing a letter like this. I want to see the ALL-SPORTS have a long life, and I feel certain that fellows will tire of Jack Lightfoot if he keeps on being such a prig. With best wishes to Mr. Stevens and the publishers, I am,

WINFRED GOFF.

Logansport, Ind.

Your criticism does not seem to us altogether just. If you had read the earlier numbers of the series you would have seen that Jack did have grave defects of character which he was obliged to overcome, a weakness against which he had to wage a hard battle. He was not depicted as he is at present, by any means; it was clearly shown that he had to overcome himself before he could gain any prominence. As for the fact that Jack can do anything, here again you have overstated. He cannot run like Wilson Crane, for an instance. At the same time, in order to be leader in anything, a man or a boy must possess superior qualities—he must be able to see clearly and

think quickly, or his orders will be first proved ineffective, then flagrantly ignored, and he will lose his position. Jack could not be leader unless he possessed superior powers, and Mr. Stevens drew his character understanding this fact full well. At the same time, we must admit that Jack is an altogether exceptional boy, and that he is much cleverer than we thought he was going to be at first. We are glad to hear from you, and hope that you will favor us whenever you have anything to say which you believe the readers of this column would be interested in reading, as your present letter undoubtedly is.

I have been reading ALL-SPORTS since the first number, and I want to tell you that I think it is fine. It seems to me that the author has hit upon just the right kind of stories to please the boys of to-day who are not particularly interested in stories of foreign travel, and who like to read the adventures of boys like themselves. I greatly enjoy the "Chat With You" and the letters. I have noticed that some of the boys who write to you get pretty excited on the subject of jiu-jitsu, and say they think it ought to be suppressed by law, and so on. That is very foolish and unreasonable. From the way they write, it seems to me that they know nothing about the method of fighting, and get all their ideas from the foolish stories told in the newspapers. Jiu-jitsu wrestling is a method of fighting invented by the Japanese, and thought out and brought to perfection as a method of self-defense for small people against big and stronger people. It is no more cruel than the English and American method of fighting, if not less so. There are three tricks used, two of which enable the fighter to break his opponent's arm and the third may be fatal. But these moves are not a bit worse than a solar-plexus blow, the cut under the chin, or a bad throw. When a man fights, he takes chances on a broken limb, anyway. I think the real cause of the objection is that people are very much afraid of it because they don't know how to work it. An objection has been made that the method would be all right if only respectable people knew it, but that it would be very dangerous to the people at large if thieves and other low characters knew it. I don't think we would be in a bit more danger than we are now. If a thug holds a man up he is liable to do him as much injury in the plain, old-fashioned fighting as he would by jiu-jitsu. In fact, as I said before, you take chances anyway when you get into a fight, and since jiu-jitsu is harder to learn and requires a better brain than most thugs possess, the man who knows how to fight that way will be able to defend himself better than he could if he stuck to the old-fashioned methods and had had no training. I hope Jack and his friends have a pleasant summer, as well as Mr. Stevens. I am going away for the summer, and I would like to have you send me my copies to the address I inclose.

BENJAMIN F. GAYNOR.

Springfield, Ohio.

Your ideas on jiu-jitsu will be somewhat new to most of our readers, who, in common with a great many older people in the country, look upon this method of fighting as being very dangerous and a menace to the community. But, as you say, a man takes chances when he goes into a fight, anyway.

I have seen a number of letters in this column attacking Phil Kirtland on the score of his supposed vanity, his snobbishness, his purse-proud inferiority, his clothes—on, in short, everything and anything about him—and I want to say that I think these attacks are not only uncalled for, but that they are narrow and mean. It does not seem to me that Phil ever displays any really bad qualities; he is not a prig, and he is anxious to be first; but those qualities are no more sins in him than they are in Jack Lightfoot, and Lightfoot, we are frequently told, is perfection. Phil is certainly shrewder than Lightfoot, so I suppose that makes him the bugaboo he is to the Jack admirers. That Phil wants credit for all he does, and likes applause whenever he excels, is no sign of weakness of character. So far as I have read or heard, few men do so much for anything but rewards of one kind or another. George Washington devoted himself to the Continental cause because he, in common with the vast majority of his fellow inhabitants of this country, wanted freedom from taxation. He did not simply start out on the warpath all by his lonesome because he had it merely as pure wisdom that freedom was a good thing. He went gunning for a certain definite object, and he kept at it until he got it. I cannot see why Phil should be attacked because he has a per-

fectly natural ambition. Then, he is attacked because Jack supplants him. Well, I know that if I had been "cock o' the walk," as Phil had been, and some other fellow suddenly butted in and became first in everything, even if he did win it by his merits, I would be sore. You're sore to lose anything, even if you couldn't help losing it. And any fellow who will say that if he were in Phil's place, he wouldn't feel a bit sore, but would recognize a superior, I say that fellow's talking about something he doesn't know anything about; that he never lost a position like that, and more, never could get one in the first place. It takes a different kind of spirit to win. Then, when they attack Phil, and call him a rigged-up dandy, and say he's a snob because he wears good clothes, it makes me tired. It is very funny to see the way people call other people snobs. I think the man who calls another a snob has proved one thing, that he deserves the title himself. In my town here, for instance, there are several good fellows who have more money to spend than the other boys, because their fathers make more. Then there are a lot of fellows who get along all right with them. But there are three or four other fellows who always fling snob at your head behind your back. But these same fellows refused to have anything to do with another fellow whose father was sent to jail. It wasn't the boy's fault that his father went to jail, but these other sanctimonious cads treated him as though he had some disease you could catch. That's the kind of people who go round calling other people snobs. How long has it been a crime to wear good clothes? It seems to me that nearly every boy's book I have read the author makes the boy who wears good clothes a villain. If you were to believe these authors, every well-dressed boy is capable of committing robberies, setting houses on fire and so on. They ought to be arrested on sight; it's a crime to let them run round loose. Now, I think that is a great mistake, and I think that Mr. Stevens makes a mistake in encouraging any such ideas. There's lots of fellows who wear good clothes who are just as good as the boys who wear the poor but clean kind you never see, but always read about. I do not see any excuse for these attacks on Phil Kirtland, and I wish you would publish this letter, long as it is, in order that any other friends of Phil may step forward, now that one has set the ball rolling. Wishing Mr. Stevens and yourself great success,

JOHN J. MULLETT.

Camden, N. J.

We trust your letter will bring forth others, friend Mullett. Phil has many friends, and now that you have championed his cause so well, we feel sure that others will follow suit. Your defense of Phil is certainly interesting reading, but we do not see just how you make Phil out to be shrewder than Jack; and then, Phil has done one or two things that were not altogether noble. But we'll leave such matters to readers, whose replies will doubtless bring out many points that we could only refer to slightly. We should advise you and the other friends of Phil to be prepared to answer the many answers your letter will provoke.

I noticed among the first letters published in your excellent weekly, which I have found the most interesting reading from the start, published in its form, one signed "J. F. C." in which the writer said: "I hope Mr. Stevens will take Jack out into the woods now and then. We have enough of gymnastic stories, as it is; what we want most is real sport." I should like to suggest that this idea be followed out. I know that all my friends like to get out in the woods once in a while, and I think that a good number of your readers in other towns like to get out, too. I think it would be a good idea to take Jack out camping and see how he behaves himself. I like baseball all right, but I think we are getting too much of it, and we know now that Cranford will win sure. That takes away a lot from the excitement of the game. If the boys went out into the country, or tried some new sports—shooting, swimming, rowing, an athletic meet—a good many of the readers would like it. Wishing Mr. Stevens and you great success,

BERNARD WOOLFE.

Akron, Ohio.

We are somewhat surprised to learn that you think we have had too much baseball in our stories, because, of all the sports dear to the American heart, baseball certainly holds first place in our affections. We may tell you, however, that the baseball season in Cranford is drawing to a close, and that you will soon have an opportunity to see how the boys behave in strange places.

HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes, in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Just at present baseball is the topic in hand, and instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 14, "How to Become a Batter." No. 15, "The Science of Place Hitting and Bunting." No. 16, "How to Cover First Base." No. 17, "Playing Shortstop." No. 18, "Pitching." No. 19, "Pitching Curves." No. 20, "The Pitcher's Team Work." No. 21, "Playing Second Base." No. 22, "Covering Third Base." No. 23, "Playing the Outfield." No. 24, "How to Catch." (I.) No. 25, "How to Catch." (II.) No. 26, "How to Run Bases."

COACHING AND THE COACH.

Few amateur teams place upon coaching and the coach anywhere near this department's and officer's real value as of prime importance to successful team work in a game. Many teams altogether neglect this important feature of playing; the majority of the remainder delegate anybody and everybody, the handiest man at the moment, vested in brief and seldom convincing authority, "to go up along the line and help the runners out," or, rather, in. Perhaps one amateur captain in five thousand is awake to the fact that at many moments of the game the coach is the man who wins or loses, and puts in the position one who is capable of taking the responsibility; the success of such a captain's team is the reward of his good sense, for success follows a good coach as sure as his shadow follows a man who walks in the sun. But the wise captains are few and the foolish captains are many. The games come out one way and another; men playing together a long time come to understand each other, and, although better work might be done with a coach, fair success is had without one, and the captains reason: "What's the use?" Probably everyone who reads this has played checkers or draughts. You can recall games in which you and your opponent were fairly evenly matched, the game was close. If you stop to think of such a game now, you will realize that the man who won, nine times out of ten, stopped and thought before he made his final moves. That's the point about coaching. Checkers and boys on the diamond are mighty different; the boys are alive, for one thing. For another, each boy differs from each checker in that if he makes a mistake, he makes it himself. He is part of the game and cannot size up the board or field as well as he could if he were in the position of the checker player moving his men over the board. But the coach is the checker player. He sees the whole field and at certain times, if he plays the other players, they and he will win. And just because success requires knowledge of the game at the moment and of the value to the score of certain plays and players, the coach who can estimate on the play is the man the team needs. A properly coached team will win more games than a better team which has no coach, simply because the better team cannot develop team work in the face of the many peculiar situations the game develops, falls back on individual

work and, at the dangerous moment, one man fails and the team goes down. The coached team is a combination; it plays and is played. At the crucial moment it wins.

The coach should, in the first place, thoroughly understand the powers of his own men as base runners. Some base runners are slow, some speedy; some men never can make a good slide, some men make their most brilliant plays sliding; some men are easily rattled, some never wake up; some get excited and can't see their way at all, some see twenty ways to act and can't decide which they'll adopt; but one thing every player knows—that at some thrilling moment every base runner will lose his head and do the thing he shouldn't do. The coach must know his men from head to foot and understand the particular cussedness each will develop under stress. At the same time, the coach must value properly the fielding and throwing ability of the defensive team; an overestimate is safer than an underestimate. He must be able to size the people he is playing against rapidly and to play his men in accordance with his knowledge of what they can do and what their opponents can do.

Coach's place is at third. Coaching at first is seldom called for. The runner must keep his eyes glued on the ball and start for second when his judgment prompts—except in certain cases when his work as a runner affects the play of others vitally, and then he must play in concert with the team as expressed by the coach.

When the player starts from second, on the other hand, he must be guided almost altogether by the coach. Many a championship game has been won by obedience to the man at third who kept the base runner on his way to home without the base runner ever knowing what sort of a ball he was running with and what the rest of the world, except the coach, was doing. The base runner should never be obliged to turn his head toward the play but should move at top speed, working altogether on signals from the coach. The loss of a fraction of a second may mean a great deal, and implicit reliance on the coach is therefore a necessity.

Just the duties of the coach in baseball terms are hard to describe. He is the general of the base runners, and, standing along the line, has the task of planning advances from base to base to home. He works with signals, given by his cap, crossing his legs or even a nod of the head. The character of the signals is of little moment as long as they are fully understood and visible to the player.

As much time should be given to the perfection of the working of the coaching department as to any other feature of a team's play. The importance of frequent practice in this work cannot be overstated. Familiarity breeds assurance in this case, and, until the whole team learns to work like clockwork of which the coach is the main-spring, success cannot be certain.

As for the best man to act as coach, the ideal is hard to find. Coach should understand the game itself and its tricks. He should know his own men and be able to guess right the opponents. Usually base runners make the best coaches, because they can feel the other men. That sort of close understanding which enables a man to appreciate the feeling of another is the prime requisite. Combined with these qualities must be those qualities without which no man can be a success on the diamond, no matter what his position—judgment, coolness and a quick wit.

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